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A DISCOURSE

ON THE

EVIL CHARACTER OF THESE OUR TIMES :

PROVING THEM TO BE THE

"Perilous Times" of the "Last Days."

BY THE

REV. EDWARD IRVING, A.M.

MINISTER OF THE NATIONAL SCOTCH CHURCH, REGENT SQUARE.

"The vile person shall no more be called LIBERAL."

ISAIAH XXXii. 5



**ELLERTON AND HENDERSON, PRINTERS,
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DEDICATION.

TO

WILLIAM DINWIDDIE, ESQ.

FATHER OF THE SESSION OF THE NATIONAL SCOTCH CHURCH;

WILLIAM HAMILTON, ESQ.

SECRETARY OF THE COMMITTEE FOR BUILDING THE
NATIONAL SCOTCH CHURCH;

AND

TO THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SESSION AND
COMMITTEE.

My dearly beloved Brethren,

THOUGH equally bound to you all, by the ties of the pastoral care, and gratitude for your zealous co-operation in the work of building up a church in this city, I have selected these two names from among your number, not only for the superabundance of their labours, acknowledged of all, but more especially for the part which they had, under Divine Providence, in my coming to this great city, to take the charge of your souls and the souls of the other members of the church. In acknowledging my gratitude to you all,

and especially to these two men, I am acknowledging my obligations, and the obligations of the church under my pastoral care, to the Providence of God, which hath made you the instruments of our edification and comfort in the Lord. And having offered this volume as my contribution to the good work in which you labour, to whom could I dedicate it so well, as to the men upon whose shoulders the burden, both temporal and spiritual, resteth? Now, forasmuch as we have endured together much grievous misrepresentation of our enemies, for these six years, I count it good to put upon record in this place, and under the sanction of those to whom the truth of what I am to state is so well known, certain facts connected with my coming to this city; because, I think, they form another testimony to God's faithfulness, and another encouragement for all devoted ministers, and for all dispersed flocks, to put their trust in the great Head of the Church.

The Caledonian Church had been placed under the pastoral care of two worthy ministers, who were successively called to parochial charges in the Church of Scotland; and by their removal, and for want of a stated ministry, it was reduced to great and almost hopeless straits. But faith hopeth against hope, and, when it does so, never faileth to be rewarded. This was proved in the case of those

two men, whose names I have singled out from your number, to give them that honour to which they are entitled in the face of the congregation. Having heard, through a friend of theirs, and now also of mine, but at that time unknown to me, of my unworthy labours in Glasgow, as Assistant to the Rev. Dr. Chalmers, they commissioned him to speak to me concerning their vacant church, and not to hide from me its present distress. Well do I remember the morning, when, as I sat in my lonely apartment, meditating the uncertainties of a preacher's calling, and revolving in my mind purposes of missionary work, this stranger stepped in upon my musing, and opened to me the commission with which he had been charged. The answer which I made to him, with which also I opened my correspondence with the brethren whose names are mentioned above, was to this effect: "If the times permitted, and your necessities required, that I should not only preach the Gospel without being burdensome to you, but also by the labour of my hands minister to your wants, this would I esteem a more honourable degree than to be Archbishop of Canterbury." And such as the beginning was, was also the continuance and the ending of this negotiation. The merchant shepherds, the hireling pastors of this day, taunted me and scorned me, when

I laid down the spirit of the Apostolic Missionary ; but they knew not, in the multitude of their uncharitable speeches, that I learned it in my own experience, and had proved it all in my own person. From the day that I received my commission to preach the Gospel, I have never bargained for a hire, nor have I ever sought a bond. The generosity of God's people hath supplied all my wants, and enabled me to minister to the wants of others. Since the days of the Apostles, and in their days, there never was joined between pastor and people a union upon more disinterested principles ; as I believe, likewise, there are few which have been productive of more abundant love and consolation on every hand. While I make these statements in justification of God's providence, in honour of Christ's headship of the church, and in refutation of my most calumnious enemies—who, God forgive them ! under the guise of religious publications, do poison the ear of simple and honest-hearted people with all manner of falsehood, malice, and evil-speaking—I do feel within myself that I was a very unworthy minister, and ill furnished for my high calling, when I first set foot in this metropolis of the kingdom. I desire to humble myself before the Lord, upon every remembrance of his goodness ; and I wish that you, and all my people, should look upon me as a

frail and sinful man, and give unto God the glory of all the benefits which you receive through such an unworthy instrument.

Being in such a spirit towards one another, the preliminaries were soon arranged ; indeed, I may say needed no arrangement ; and I came up on the day before the Christmas of 1821, to make trial and proof of my gifts before the remnant of the congregation which still held together. Wherewith being satisfied, I took my journey homewards, waiting the good pleasure of the great Head of the church. Many were the difficulties and obstacles which Satan threw in the way, and which threatened hard to defeat altogether our desire and our purpose of being united in one. Amongst others, one, which would have deterred many men, was my inability to preach in the Gaelic language, of which I knew not a single word ; but, such was the steadiness of purpose with which I desired to preach the Gospel in London, and to be your Pastor, that this impediment cost me not a thought, and I resolved forthwith to domesticate myself in the Highlands, and master their ancient tongue. God, having proved our willingness, was pleased to remove this obstacle out of the way. And another obstacle to my ordination, arising out of the rule of the Scottish Church not to ordain without an assurance on the part of the people calling the Minister to give him a livelihood,

your readiness, without any request of mine, removed out of the way. To those brethren who came forward so voluntarily, and so liberally, on that occasion, the Church, and the Minister of the Church, are much beholden; and all of us are beholden to God, who useth us in any way, however humble, for the accomplishment of his good purposes.

Having received ordination from the Presbytery, and in the church in which I was baptized, in which, I may likewise add, I was lately honoured first to preach the Advent of our Lord in my native land; and having experienced of my dear friend, Dr. Chalmers, the singular honour of administering the sacrament to his parish flock, being my first act as an ordained minister; I set out, on this very morning six years ago, on my way to London: so that I may say my seventh year of labour begins with this record of God's dealings with us during six years of constant and unceasing work. May it prove unto us as a Sabbatical year of rest, wherein our souls shall yield abundant fruit, through the free-will operation of the Holy Ghost!—For one year, or nearly so, beginning with the second Sabbath of July 1822, our union went on cementing itself, by mutual acts of kindness, in the shade of that happy obscurity which we then enjoyed. And I delight to remember that season of our mutual love and confidence; because

the noisy tongues of men and their envious eyes were not upon us. And you know, and can bear testimony, whether the public opinion, or the desire of it, had any thing to do with the nature of my pulpit discourses or private ministrations. I can say with a safe conscience, that to this hour it never cost me a thought to gain it, nor to keep it, nor to lose it. I count it so volatile and so wicked, that, upon the whole, I would rather have it against me than with me. Yet can I not look back, upon the second, and third, and fourth years of my ministry, without astonishment and amazement, that God should have honoured a man unknown, despised, and almost outcast (save by you and a small, small remnant of my native church), to preach his Gospel to every rank and degree of men, from the lowest, basest of our press hirelings, up to the right hand of Royalty itself. Of this honour I will boast, and none shall prevent me boasting of it, in that spirit, I trust, of foolishness for Christ's sake in which Paul boasted before the churches of Achaia. My God honoured his servant, whom the religious world despised. By a man spoken against, reviled, suspected, and avoided, by those who usurp the Evangelical name as if it were all their own, my God did speak unto the heads and representatives and nobles and princes of this nation. In the review of which high and ho-

nourable distinction, I desire again to humble myself before God, as his most unworthy servant; and especially to acknowledge that power which he gave me to speak, without fear or dread, his holy word unto princes. It was his doing, and for his own ends was it done. He glorified himself in mine infirmities. His work was not acknowledged by those who should have acknowledged it; and therefore, though late, I do tender unto him hearty acknowledgments for the witness and the testimony to his truth which he enabled me to lift up, in ears, alas! too little accustomed to hear it. These things I should be the last to say; but they should not remain unsaid, they should not remain unacknowledged to the Doer of all things.

After our church was honoured to do this service for God and the commonwealth, we were rewarded by larger openings of Divine doctrine, and closer fellowship of the Holy Ghost, and greater increase of the flock. The doctrine especially of the blessed Trinity, and the offices sustained by the Persons thereof in our salvation, I desire, for my church and for myself, to acknowledge, was then opened to us, and remained no longer, as it is to most, a believed but unknown mystery. Next, the doctrine of the Gentile Apostasy, as exhibited in the Papal superstition, and in Protestant beralism, was made instrumental, under God;

to deliver the church from the false hope of converting a world which standeth ripe and ready for judgment; and did set us free from the spirit of expediency, that spirit which now worketh in the religious world.—To a right understanding of the present condition of the church, and its immediate judgment, we were greatly helped by attaining unto the mystery of Baptism, as constituting a people in covenant, and responsible for the privileges of the covenant. This doctrine, which the infatuated church either fondly adopts, or maliciously represents, as ‘baptismal regeneration,’ is, in fact, the only one which puts a difference between us and a heathen nation: and while it is not apprehended, it is impossible for the deluded people to believe that we shall be judged before or beyond the heathen, or that we shall be judged at all; seeing, to speak nothing but the truth, we are, after all, the best portion of the earth. But, being measured by our obligations as a baptized nation; being measured by our privileges as a Protestant nation; into what an awful depth below Papists, Mohammedans, and Heathens, do we at once sink! I bless God, in behalf of my people, that he did open to us the mystery of the grace, the privilege, and the obligation of the baptismal covenant.—Next in the order of God’s mercies to us, we have to acknowledge his instructing of us in the true humanity of

Christ—or rather, I should say, that he has enabled us to stand and suffer reproach for the most catholic and orthodox doctrine, that Christ took human nature in the fallen, and not in the unfallen, state; which, to my horror and amazement, I do find those theological babes of the religious world ready to renounce. Where will their renunciations end? They will end where it is expedient for them to stop; but so long as it will bring more reputation, more rank, and more money, they will renounce whatever displeaseth public opinion.—Well, my beloved brethren, the time is come for every man to look unto the foundation he resteth on, as well as the superstructure he is rearing upon it. There is nothing safe. Every thing is sapped and undermined: the first blast of fear, the first blow of violence, the first wave of commotion, will make it reel and totter. I have an exquisite pleasure in looking back upon the way by which we have been led; and how, as we took every new step in advance, the archers shot at us; but have not prevailed against us.—And now, finally, and above all, as the consummation of the whole, it pleased God to make known to us the coming of Christ in glory and in majesty, and his reign upon the earth for a thousand years, together with the resurrection of the saints, and the other mysteries of grace therewith connected.—These have been God's special

gifts unto us as a church; which ought never to be forgotten, and which I desire, as your mouth, devoutly to acknowledge unto Christ, the great Head of the church, and unto the God and Father of all the dispensations.

While remembering, and recording, and devoutly acknowledging, these the gracious gifts of our God and Saviour, let us not forget the visible monument of our gratitude as a church, which we have these five years been labouring to build up, and which we have now almost finished. They who have laboured in this work for the Lord's sake, will not lose their reward. They who have given of their substance in its behalf, will know themselves no poorer. They who have given their time, and their counsels, will not find their own affairs less prosperous, or less wisely advised. Thankfully do I acknowledge the debt which my people owe to all such generous benefactors.

My conviction is, dearly beloved brethren, that many trials and many sacrifices abide us. The spirit of the church, and the spirit of the nation, grows worse and worse. The times are both perilous and evil. This city is the place in which the church will have to abide a fearful struggle. We are not unknown, nor unnoticed, by the enemies of Christ. Satan owes us many a grudge; and he will come; and whatever he hath in us he will wrench

away from us. Cleanse yourselves, therefore; purify yourselves; give yourselves wholly unto Christ; dwell in love one with another; abide in the truth; be stedfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour in the Lord shall not be in vain.

I am,

Dearly beloved Brethren,

Your affectionate

And dutiful Pastor,

EDWARD IRVING.

NATIONAL SCOTCH CHURCH,
8th July, 1828.

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INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE.

THE LAST DAYS.

2 TIM. iii. 1—6.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own-selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God ; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. From such turn away.

BEFORE proceeding to open this text, with which I have chosen to introduce this year's ministrations, I have an observation to make concerning our duties in common, with respect to the year which is past. And I pray you to give heed to it; for I shall do no more than mention it, in my great anxiety to act upon the subject in hand. God having, in his providence, preserved us through the perils and evils of the year which is past, we desire, this morning of the first Sabbath

of a new year, to begin our office of preaching, by exhorting you, his people, to take a retrospect of the year that is just ended; and to call to remembrance the most signal of the acts and dealings of God towards your souls, towards your families, and towards the church of Christ, more especially towards this individual church of which you are members; and, having recalled these the Lord's providences, whether prosperous or adverse, to speak of them all in his holy ear, and in the ear of his saints, with the suitable affections of joy or of grief, with just acknowledgment of his righteous hand, and patient resignation to his sovereign will. By which diligent and dutiful review and rehearsal unto the Lord, and unto those whom you admit into the confidence of your religious experience, it will come to pass, through the mercy of God and the admonitions of his Spirit, that your souls will be furnished with new faith and trust in the Almighty hand, which overruleth all; and you will receive new insight into the principles of his Divine government, and be endowed with new wisdom from above, to administer all things unto his glory. This duty, dear brethren, so becoming in a steward of God at all times and seasons, is especially so at this the commencement of a new time, when, in your secular affairs, you deem it necessary that every one of your agents, and stewards, and servants should make up his accounts for the year, and render you a faithful reckoning of all

his intromissions: not to do so, argueth great remissness, great insensibility, or great unfaithfulness to the great Householder and Sovereign. And as in your secular affairs you strike a balance, first of profit and loss, to ascertain the fruits and rewards of your labours; and, secondly, of all the stock of goods which you have on hand to trade upon and profit by in the year ensuing: so would I have every one of you, first, endeavour to ascertain how much you have profited in the riches of knowledge, and wisdom, and holiness, from the means and opportunities you have had, during the past year; and, secondly, what amount and investment of the talents of the kingdom you now possess, for the end of increasing them to your own advantage, and devoting them to the glory of our Lord.

Now this duty which I recommend to you all is one in which no man can help you, and which every one must discharge for himself, by faithful self-examination and careful observation of the hand of God: and therefore, having recommended it to you all, as my first counsel this year, I do now proceed to handle the subject contained in my text, which is, The evil character of the times in which we live. And this I do not out of any diseased appetite or censorious inclination, but for the admonition and warning of you, my people, that ye may know how much Divine grace, wisdom, and strength are necessary for the right conduct of

Christian life; and that I may have a broad foundation for the instructions and warnings with which I would now furnish your goings forth afresh into the world. I consider that we are all entering upon a new and unknown region of experience; as it were, a *terra incognita* of time; a period which heaveth, as if it were pregnant with great events. And I would now, as your counsellor, endeavour, so far as in me lies, to provide you with the resources which you may have need of, and to put you upon your guard against the impediments and adversities which you may have to encounter.

In handling this subject, I would first shew to you, out of the Holy Scriptures, that the last times of the Gentile dispensation, or of that church to which the Scriptures of the New Testament refer, are continually set forth as evil, and not as good.

In the preceding part of the Epistle, which was written in the prisons of Rome, immediately before his being offered, the Apostle is very zealous and earnest in his admonitions and charge to Timothy, that he would abide faithful in the midst of the general defection; and not be deterred by any fear of what man could do against him; nor drawn aside into those foolish and unlearned questions, by which Satan had already perverted many from the simplicity of the faith. Of those heresies he nameth one (ii. 17), which was, that the resurrection was past already: which, no doubt, arose

from the overstraining of the apostolical view of baptism, as setting forth and sealing to the faithful the mystery of their resurrection, and introducing them to the resurrection of faith. This doctrine, which we have lately sought in several discourses to revive from its present death inflicted upon it by the weapons of the intellect, Hymeneus and Philetus, and those who followed their divisive courses, interpreted by the sense, and actually held that the first resurrection was already done upon the faithful in baptism. As, indeed, I have heard many divines of this day assert, that the first resurrection is no more than our regeneration. Connect this error with the constant doctrine of the primitive times, that those who were partakers of the first resurrection should receive a hundred-fold for all the enjoyments of this life which they had surrendered, and not be hurt of the second death, but reign with Christ as kings and priests upon the earth; and you open the door to all lust and vanity, and have the rudiments of that most abominable heresy of Cerinthus and the Millenarians, which was working in the Apostles' days, and wrought on for three centuries, until Satan, by means of it, succeeded in wholly discrediting the doctrine of the first resurrection, and the kingdom of Christ and his saints upon the earth. This heresy the Apostle is not content with merely denouncing, but, in ver. 20, by the similitude of a great house, where are vessels to honour

and vessels to dishonour, openeth to us the mystery of the Divine purpose in permitting schismatics and heretics to be found in his church, for the end of shewing that there also he proceedeth by the election of his own will; and must be acknowledged and besought as the sovereign dispenser of grace, and disposer of conditions. Which to forget, in the admiration and much-making either of the love of Christ or the work of the Spirit, is to subvert the foundations and bring all things into most fatal disorder and utter confusion. He then warneth his son Timothy against the lusts or strong and heady inclinations of youth, and commendeth to him to cultivate the communion of the saints in righteousness, faith, charity, and peace. And further, he warneth him against foolish and unlearned questions, which indulge the malicious and controversial humours of the intellect, and engender strivings and contentions for no worthy end; exhorting him to be "gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;" and that they may recover themselves out of "the snare of the devil, who are taken captive at his will." A lesson which I beseech God that I may be enabled to learn and to preach at all times, and especially in the discourses which I have now undertaken to set forth, concerning the spirit which is abroad in these times.

Such is the previous context of the passage under our consideration, consisting of several notices of backslidings and errors in the Christian church, towards which the Apostle directeth the attention of Timothy, and teacheth him how to carry himself. And, "being ready to be offered," as it were feeling insecure of a day, he passeth from the heresies which were then present, to speak of those which should come in the last days. As Jacob, the father of the twelve patriarchs, when he was about to die called unto him his sons and said, "Gather yourselves together that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days" (Gen. xlix. 1); so doth Paul, the father of the Gentile church, being about to be offered upon the sacrifice of his faith, calls the attention of Timothy his beloved son to the state of the Gentile church in the last days of the dispensation. And he begins it with a solemn assurance: "This know also," that however improbable and impossible it might seem to Timothy that God should permit his church to come into such a corrupt state, it would surely so come to pass according to his word. Having finished the description of the last times, as we have read it in your hearing (1—5), he exhorteth the Evangelist to turn away from all who should shew such evil disposition of heart. For, though, it was to be reserved till the last times to complete the Apostasy and reveal the perfect Antichrist, all the Apostles, without exception, had discern-

ment to perceive him already in the embryo state, and did most faithfully point out, for the avoidance of the church, all those who had already been taken in the snare. How much more, then, is it our part, who live so close upon his complete revelation, and most insolent and mighty power, to consider who he is and who are of him; to know his artful wiles, and to be prepared for his open attacks! "From such turn away; for of this sort are they." And so he proceedeth to describe their crafty insinuations, first into the weakest of the weaker sex; and their resisting the truth, as the Egyptian magicians resisted Moses;—upon whom he denounceth some judgment of shame and detection, which the Lord was hastening to bring. And, then, having cleared himself by the testimony of his life and sufferings, from all share in such imposture, he announceth a great truth, verse 13; "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived;" signifying, thereby, that, undeterred by the shame and exposure which God, in mercy to them, and warning to his church, would bring upon them, the evil spirits who were then seducing the church, being themselves seduced by Satan, should not, thereby, be prevented from growing worse and worse until they brought in the last most evil and perilous days. In the view of which mighty work of Satan in the church, he giveth Timothy such a charge, concerning his preaching, as is

not to be found in all the Scriptures besides, upon his responsibility to Christ at his appearing, when he should be raised up from the mouldering dust of the grave to stand in honour before the Great Head of the church; or if not at that judgment of the quick, then at the judgment of the dead, he should not escape. And this I take to be the reason why the judgment of the quick and the dead, separated from one another by the Millennium, are named together in the charge, in order to meet both possibilities of his proving faithful and of his proving unfaithful; the judgment of the quick being in Scripture continually pointed to as the day of the church's reward; the judgment of the dead as the day of second death and destruction unto the wicked. Now, I think, that this allusion to Christ's coming to judge the quick and the dead, besides being intended to stir Timothy up with the sense of his responsibility, or the hope of his reward, is intended to carry his mind forward to the time when these seductions of the seducer should have their end, and the mystery of Satan's iniquity should be judged. He directs his attention to the glorious conclusion of the weary warfare which the preachers of the Gospel had to wage against the seducers and the seduced, in order that Timothy and all faithful preachers might have patience and long-suffering, knowing of a time when their labours should have a most glorious end. To which unequal contest, that

the preachers of Christ should be called upon to wage, he reverteth, verse 3: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." Against the coming on of which apostasy, the Apostle again calleth him to contend, for his example taking himself, who was now ready to be offered, and the time of his departure at hand. And thus, in sublime assurance of faith, he concludeth: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but to all who love his appearing."

Thus have you, dear brethren, a succinct account, and I trust a clear view, of the context, in the midst of which our text lies embosomed. And I make no doubt you will agree with me in thinking that its main intention is to reveal an apostasy already begun in the church, and to grow worse and worse until the end, when it should leaven the whole constitution of religious, moral, and political society, and bring in these perilous times mentioned in the text. You will also allow that against this the great instrument with which the Lord would contend for the redemption of his people, and the continuation of his elect witnesses, should be the preaching of the word, which, surely, ought to know its enemy, if it would contend against him; and, therefore,

it very much afflicteth me, that not one in a hundred amongst us, I might say one in a thousand, if I include the heaps whom the itching ears of the sects have installed in that office, doth know the form of Satan's work in the church, that they should contend against it; but are still dealing with men as if they were mere heathens to be converted from paganism and idolatry. It is from this, if not manifest, yet to be discerned, that, until the coming of the Lord, this contention between the light and the darkness in the church is to go on, and by his violent judgment is to be ended, and his people gloriously justified. So much for the context of the passage.

We shall now proceed to settle, as far as we are able, what is signified by the last days in which the perilous times are to come. There are, and there can be, only two opinions with respect to this point; the first, that they are the last days of the Jewish; and the second, that they are the last days of the Christian dispensation. Of those the former has been taken up by the opposers of the personal reign of Christ, and urged with great ingenuity, for the end and purpose of getting all the allusions to the coming of Christ, crushed into the events attendant upon the destruction of Jerusalem, which was typical thereof. There can be no doubt that Christ and the Apostles also, in giving the prophecy, and the particulars of his second coming, and

the state of the world at that time, and the judgments to be inflicted thereon, do include in their description all which happened to Jerusalem at its overthrow : in like manner, as the prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the present dispersion and captivity of Judah, and its deliverance thence in the great day of recompence, do contain under them, and do distinctly announce, as it were, in the overture of the prophetic burden, their temporary captivity in Babylon, and their deliverance by the hand of Cyrus. But as no just interpreter of Scripture prophecy, or intelligent observer of the providence of God, doubteth that their present long and grievous dispersion, and their future mighty and terrible deliverance, is that which is chiefly the object of the prophecy ; so neither will any fair and just interpreter of the Lord's prophecies, and the prophecies of the Apostles, doubt that the judgment of the world, and his second glorious advent, are the great end and object of which the judgment on Jerusalem was but the type and the foreshewing. And the reason why the destruction of Jerusalem can typify and foreshew the destruction of Gentile Christendom, is, that they are both the acts of God's vengeance upon a backsliding and incorrigible church. And, therefore, I make no doubt that the Lord and his Apostles had both in their eye, keeping the one in a subordinate place to the other. But any one who would go about to maintain upon this account that the

destruction of Jerusalem is the main or the only end of these prophecies, must indeed exercise great ingenuity, and incur great guilt in wresting the plain meaning of God's word, before which every one who readeth it should tremble, and lay himself prostrate. I am willing to admit, for example, that those persons mentioned from the 6th to the 10th verse, and compared to Jannes and Jambres, the magicians of Pharaoh, who withstood Moses, were perhaps Jews, who had taken on the profession of Christ, being all the while of that synagogue of Satan which our Lord so frequently mentions in his Epistles to the Seven Churches, and that they, with other Judaizers, met their punishment in the miserable judgments which in those times were inflicted upon the Jewish people. But that the first five verses in which the term "men" is used, generally and largely, and in which they are said to have a form of godliness, and that the expression, "the last times," and the expression, "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine," and the expression, "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived;" that such expressions of the Holy Ghost shall be restricted to an event which happened only five years after this Epistle was written, (for within five years Jerusalem and its temple were destroyed,) is such a stultifying, not to say falsifying of all language, that I can by no means admit it for a moment. Besides, the

judgment upon Jerusalem did not affect the Christian church at all, to whose apostasy the whole context hath reference ; for the Christians were saved from that judgment. And to guard against the progress of this apostasy in the Christian church, the Apostle instructs Timothy (ii. 2) ; “ The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also ; ” thereby making provision for a succession and enlargement of teachers and preachers in the Christian church. Furthermore, when warning him against strifes of words, he saith (ver. 16, 17), “ that they will increase unto more ungodliness : and their word will eat as doth a canker ” or gangrene ; which, beginning in any part of the body, ceases not till it hath corrupted the whole, to the very vitals, and so produceth death. Thereby meaning, that the apostasy which he saw, like the plague spot, just beginning, would not cease till it had spread over the whole church, and brought it to a violent end. These remarks I make in general, upon that low and unworthy interpretation which would limit these last days to the five years next to come of the Christian church, which hath been in being now for nearly two thousand years. Its foolishness will more fully appear as we proceed with our inquiry into the true meaning of the last days in which these perilous times are to come.

The first time that this expression occurreth,

is in that passage already referred to (Gen. xlix. 1), where Jacob gathers the twelve patriarchs together, in order to teach them what should befall them in the last days. Now, if these predictions be fulfilled, then the last days are past: if they be not fulfilled, they are yet to come. That they are not at all fulfilled as yet, in order to be convinced, you have only to take some of the more conspicuous of them. I do not say but that they have received a partial fulfilment; but the substance of the blessings yet remaineth unaccomplished. For example, Judah is in captivity, and hath none of that power and glory which is described in the 9th verse: and though the 10th verse, which contains the coming of Shiloh, be fulfilled, so far as his appearance is concerned, yet in no wise hath it been fulfilled as to his acts, described in that and the following verse; for the gathering of the people hath not been to him: whether that word people be taken of the Jews, or of the Gentiles, he scattered the Jewish people, and he took out an election from the Gentiles, but that election is in a dispersed, not a gathered state. The gathering of the nations is from him, not to him. He hath not yet received the congregation, nor will he until the present foundations of the earth be dissolved. (Ps. lxxv.) Neither hath he bound his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the chosen vine; which is an emblem of his coming in royal state to the vineyard of the church: neither hath he

washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes; which taketh place at the treading of the wine press upon his second coming (Isai. lxiii. 1—7; xxxiv. 8; Rev. xix. 13—15). In like manner of Joseph's blessing, nothing of all that occurreth from ver. 24 to 27 hath ever been accomplished, especially that interjection ("hence is the Shepherd and Stone of Israel"); for Christ, as the Shepherd or the gatherer, as the Stone or the breaker of his enemies, hath not yet appeared out of Joseph. Neither doth Naphtali give goodly words, nor Dan judge his people; nor hath Gad overcome at the last; nor hath Benjamin ravened as a wolf, in the morning devouring the prey, and at night dividing the spoil; nor indeed, as I judge, hath any one of these fates in its spirit been fulfilled. It may be said that Levi hath been scattered in Israel, but Simeon hath not: and though Zebulun dwelt at the haven of the sea, we hear not of any great maritime distinction which he attained. That nothing hath happened to the tribes of Israel to fulfil these great characteristic distinctions, every one who interpreteth according to the words, will easily perceive. That they will be fulfilled, and be the characteristics of the twelve tribes in the last days, every one who believeth Scripture will believe. I conclude, therefore, that the last days which is to bring out the veracity of these distinctions are not yet arrived, but will begin to run from the time of God's appearing

for his ancient people, and gathering them together to the work of destroying all Anti-Christian nations, of evangelising the world, and of governing it during the Millennium; very manifest it is, that the last days of the Jewish dispensation did least of all accomplish any part of any of these predictions, except the coming of Shiloh,—which indeed they did see, but none of the mysteries for which he came. Now, the coming of Shiloh is introduced into the blessing of Judah, for the sake of the exaltation which Judah, through him, was to receive, which Judah hath not received, but, contrariwise, evil, and captivity, and disgrace; in which dishonour and weakness Benjamin did then partake, instead of that rampant might and joyful triumph which is foreshewn to him. And seven hundred years before these last days of the Jewish dispensation, all the other tribes had been lost, and have not been heard of since. What can be said then, but that if these last days refer to the last days of the Jewish dispensation, the prophecy hath utterly failed; if, to the last days of the Christian dispensation, the prophecy may be fulfilled; and it consisteth with the whole spirit of prophecy, that it should be fulfilled.

The next passage to which I will carry you for further light upon this subject, is in the book of Job (xix. 25): “For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he will stand at the latter day” (‘in the latter days,’ or ‘at last,’

or 'at the last day,' or 'at the end;' for in all these ways consenting together the passage hath been translated). "And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me." The things which Job was to see in the last days are the following: First, his Redeemer standing upon the earth; second, that after being devoured with worms, he himself in flesh—that is, in flesh raised from corruption—should see God. This can apply to no time but the second coming of the Lord, and the resurrection of his saints to meet him in the flesh, and be with him for ever. The latter day, or the last days of Job, carries us through this present dispensation of trouble and sorrow, to the coming of Christ in vengeance, as the Redeemer of his suffering people from the hands of their enemies, their Avenger upon death, and their Liberator from the grave. Which being coincident with the consummation of the Gentile apostasy, and the restoration of the Jews, doth exactly coalesce with what we have already discovered.

The next is one of those few passages which occur twice in the Holy Scriptures (Isa. ii. 2; Micah iv. 1): "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all

nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord." Here, for determining what period in Scripture is understood by the term "the last days," we have these events prophesied as then about to take place. (1.) The establishment of Mount Zion where the Lord's house stood, upon the top of the mountains; that is, its pre-eminency above all other places of the earth, its conspicuousness in the eyes of all the world, and its distinction from the hand of God, as the seat of his worship and glory. (2.) The flowing of all nations into it, as the centre of their covenant, to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles; whither if any nation go not up, by solemn deputation or otherwise, it is said that upon that nation shall be no rain. (Zech. xiv. 16.) (3.) The continual influx thither of many peoples to his house, and to be instructed in his ways.

(4.) The Lord's judging among, or ruling over the nations, and his rebuking or cleansing of many peoples. (5.) The ceasing and determination of all war for ever, and the very suppression of the knowledge and study of it. (6.) The walking of the house of Jacob in the light of the Lord. Now, it is needless to say to you, that not one of these things has yet been fulfilled, but the very contrary of these things up to this day hath the earth beheld; Mount Zion hath been successively trodden under the foot of almost every nation under heaven, and God's name blasphemed there by every superstition and apostasy which hath been since the time of the first captivity. The Lord hath not yet taken upon him the rule and sovereignty of the nations, but conducts it by the government of kings and magistrates, whom the Scripture calleth gods. See particularly Ps. lxxxii. xcv. xcvi. xcvi. When he ascended up on high, the Christian church preached him, "the Lord," as well as "the Christ." And thus his right and title hath by preaching been announced in all lands, to see if they would acknowledge it. They have all, saving this kingdom, renounced his royal prerogative; (it was so when I wrote, but is not any more so, woe is me!) and been guilty of high treason against the King; and therefore the Father shall bring him in over their prostrate usurpations. To constitute a judgment of rulers, it was first necessary that they should offend

in their place of rulers ; to this end Christ was proclaimed King by Peter on the day of Pentecost, and by every true preacher since ; against which proclamation of God's King, every king or magistrate who lifteth up the horn of his own or another's power, shall die like one of the princes, shall be dashed in pieces like the potter's vessel. Though Christ, therefore, be the King proclaimed, the devil is the king whom they have preferred, except this kingdom, whose foundations are (were, alas !) true, whatever its administration may be. Christ hath not, therefore, judged among the nations, nor rebuked many peoples ; nor have men abstained from war, or making weapons of war, whereof all Christendom seems but one great forge, where every hammer is plied, and every inventive faculty strained, for such an explosion of war as the world hath never yet seen. Neither doth the house of Jacob walk in the light of the Lord. The conclusion, then, is simple, that the last days are not come, because none of the events of the last days are yet in being.

The next passage to which I have to direct your attention, is the last verse of the book of Daniel, where it is written, " But go thy way till the end be : for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." The first question here is, what days meaneth he ? The verse preceding furnisheth the answer : " Blessed is he that watcheth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." These are the days at the end of which Daniel was to

stand in his lot; that is, his allotted office or station upon the earth; for if it be his condition in the middle state, then he is in it long ere now. Daniel is now resting with Job and the rest of the saints; but at the end of these days he shall stand in his lot of active administration. Now concerning this awakening from the sleep of the dust, you have particular mention made of it in ver. 2, and in ver. 1, concerning the deliverance of the Jewish people, and the time of unexampled trouble which is to precede it. And in the last verse of the foregoing chapter, you have the destruction of the infidel Antichrist, which is to precede these, or to fall out about the same time. Of which events not one having yet happened, we can with perfect certainty say, that "the end of the days," or the last days, are not yet ushered in. But a more particular consideration of this passage will throw yet more light upon the subject which we have in hand. After Christ—for it is no other—had revealed all the mysteries up to the resurrection of the saints, Daniel heard (ver. 6) a questioner ask further information as to the time, "how long it should be to the end of these wonders." Who received for answer, that it should be for "a time, times, and a half;" that is, the period of the little horn's tyranny over the saints: but how much longer he saith not, but signifieth that it should be for a season longer, until God should have accomplished to scatter (that is, should be done or finished with scattering) the

power of the holy people ; then all these things should be finished. That is to say, they would run through the Papal period, and continue till the restoration of the Jews. Daniel, not understanding this, because it was sealed till the times of the end, and hath only lately been opened, did inquire at one of the questioners, "What shall be the end of these things?" and in answer received this information (ver. 11): "From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination which maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that watcheth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and thirty days." All the time up to the conclusion of the Papal usurpation is reckoned by times, being one thousand two hundred and sixty days ; but all beyond it is reckoned by days, being thirty days and forty-five days, these being the odd days over the three times and a half ; a time or year being three hundred and sixty of these days, as we learn from the Apocalypse. (Compare xi. 2, 3, with xii. 6, 14.) The times and the fulness of the times, so often mentioned in the New Testament, I consider as referring to the great period numbered by times ; the days, to the thirty and the forty-five days by which the course of the Lord's purposes overwent the three times and a half. Of these days, I should consider the forty-five days to be the last of the days in which these great events are to be revealed. Now if this reasoning be correct, as there can be little

doubt that the one thousand two hundred and sixty days concluded in the year 1792, and the thirty additional days in the year 1823, we are already entered upon the last days, and the ordinary life of a man will carry many of us to the end of them. If this be so, it gives to the subject with which we have introduced this year's ministry, a very great importance indeed. Further, if you will look to the opening of this vision (x. 14), you will see a great confirmation of this our conclusion; for it is there said, that this vision was expressly given to shew him "what should befall his people in the latter days." Now in all the vision the Jewish people are not once mentioned till xii. 1, when they are delivered immediately upon the fall of Antichrist; which is not yet happened, and is, as we believe, just about to arrive.

Before leaving the book of Daniel, I would direct your attention to another passage (ii. 28), where Daniel declareth unto Nebuchadnezzar, that God had sent that vision of the great image to make known to him what should happen in the latter days. Now of that vision, though the four successive monarchies be a part, yet the destruction of them by the fifth monarchy of Messiah is the chief part, and is no doubt the great end of the vision, in order to instruct Nebuchadnezzar, and all kings that should come after him, concerning the end of these four monarchies, into which God had divided the tract of time, until he should set his own King

upon his holy hill of Zion. The great image is only presented before him, that the stone cut out without hands, which destroyeth it, might be represented. And the interpretation satisfies no curiosity as to the three kingdoms which were to succeed him ; but as to the fifth kingdom, gives him full and clear revelation that it was to belong to the saints of the Most High. Therefore "the latter days," concerning which the vision was sent to teach Nebuchadnezzar are the times of the destruction of the four monarchies, and the setting up of the fifth in a time which is yet to come, but which we believe to be close at hand. I consider it, therefore to be clear, from the book of Daniel, that the latter days do signify the time at which the Jewish people shall enter to the long promised and long delayed kingdom, after the four Gentile monarchies shall have been brought to an end by the Stone of Israel, which is to come out of Joseph ; at which time the characteristic predictions of Jacob shall begin to have their accomplishment.

Besides these, dear brethren, there are several other passages, which I would run over hastily, beginning with Numbers xxiv. 14 ; which is the parable spoken by Balaam the son of Beor, when Balak king of Moab would have had him prophesy evil of the children of Israel : "Come, therefore, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days." Now, what are these events ? Ver. 17 contains the prophecy of Messiah's coming as a star out of

Jacob, and a sceptre out of Israel, smiting the corners of Moab and destroying all the children of Seth, when Edom shall be his possession, and Seir likewise, and Israel shall do valiantly : out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city. These are future events which the Messiah will accomplish by means of his people, when he shall gather them again and use them as his battle-axe to beat down his enemies. The prophetic Edom, here signified, continues in the mystical Babylon; and of Moab whom a sceptre out of Israel shall smite, though it be not apparent to us who or where the children of Moab are, yet we know that some people under that name shall return at the latter day. "I will bring back the captivity of Moab in the latter days, saith the Lord." And that the sceptre which smiteth them is the universal sceptre of Messiah is manifest from its being added, that it shall destroy all the children of Seth; that is, all the children of men. In the book of Deuteronomy there are two other references to the latter days : the first, chap. iv. 30; after having described the judgments which the Lord would bring upon the people of Israel, after they had been reduced to the state in which we find them at this day, ver. 27: "The Lord shall scatter you among the nations; and ye shall be left few in number amongst the heathen, whither the Lord shall lead you;" then, referring to the time of their mercy, he adds, ver. 30, "When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come

upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn unto the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice, he will not forsake thee." In like manner, when Moses prepares himself to sing his song, setting forth God's dealings with the people, he referreth to the latter days. (Deut. xxxi. 29.) And Hosea, after having described the condition of the children of Israel abiding many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim, addeth, "Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their King: and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days."

There is only one other passage to which I will refer you, namely, the burden of Gog. (Ezekiel xxxviii.) Of which it is said (ver. 16), that "it shall be in the latter days." So also, in ver. 8, "After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them." From this it is clear that the invasion of Gog doth not take place till the children of Israel are some time established in their own land. For the purpose of spoiling them, they are represented as coming up (ver. 12.) "to take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are not inhabited, and upon the

Jacob, and a sceptre out of the mountains, the corners of Moab and do that dwell of Seth, when Edom shall consisteth Seir likewise, and Israel of the East, of Jacob shall come from the Roman and shall destroy the great congregation. These are future prophecies spoken accomplish in Jer. 17: "Thus shall gath be of whom I battle-against my servants the prophet prophesied in those the Lord and bring thee against seer their utter destruction not immediate interference of And it shall come to when Gog shall come Israel, saith the Lord God, come up in my face: for in the fire of my wrath have I that day there shall be a great and of Israel." From which act great result cometh to the whole I magnify myself, and sanctify I will be known in the eyes of and they shall know that I am

As has been ascertained what time is signified by these days, I proceed to shew, from various Scripture, that they are *evil*, and not *good*. In next to what hath been drawn from the context, I take my proof from the conclusion of the xviii and the beginning of the xix chapters of Luke's Gospel, where the ver. 26. compareth the state of the church

(for it is to his disciples that the discourse is addressed) in the day of his revelation, or coming again, to the state of the world in the days of Noah, when all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth, and (ver. 28.) to the state of Sodom and the cities of the plain, whose extreme and unnatural wickedness ascending up to heaven, brought down upon them the fire and brimstone of the Lord's revenge. And this, not in one place of Scripture, but in several, is put forth as the true resemblance of the state of the church and world before Christ shall come; that is, in the last days of the present age or dispensation. The Lord having given admonitions suitable to such a sinful condition of things for the use of the few, who shall be found endued with faith, doth in the beginning of the xviiith chapter, place before us by the parable of the widow and the unjust steward, the character, and progress, and conclusion of the present age of the church. The poor evil-treated widow, crying for vengeance against her adversary, represents his church now enduring widowhood, and to endure it until her Lord and husband shall come again. The adversary from whom she suffers is Satan, incorporate in the elements and in the society of this wicked world. The unjust judge with whom her importunity at length prevailed, representeth God the Judge of all, who to exercise his church's faith and patience hath long, and as it were unjustly, withheld the judgment written against satan and the world. And to the

end that the church or elect may never weary of crying unto the Lord for vengeance, he shews them what prevalence importunity had with the unjust, how much more with the righteous Judge of all; adding these words to which we call your attention (ver. 7): "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily." This expectation and assurance of redress, in the Lord's time, was intended to keep up her heart and to increase her importunity, according as the wickedness and oppression of the world gained a-head, and hastened to rival the days of Noah and of Lot. But, foreseeing how far otherwise it would be with his church, and how all the virgins, without exception, would slumber and sleep, he addeth these awful words: "Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" as his custom was, not putting it forth as a positive declaration, that he should find none, but as a question whether he should find any; and so connecting the question with the previous assurance of speedy redress as unequivocally to bear, and to the wise more strongly to affirm, that notwithstanding the assurance which he had given of speedy judgment upon the adversaries of his elect, their faith would be so worn-out by the long delay, that when the judgment came, when the Son came to judge, as heretofore he came to save, he would not find any faith of such a judgment existing in his church, who

therefore must have subsided into such a contentment with her condition, become so forgetful of her widowhood, and pleased with her injurious adversary, as to cease from the desire, and the hope, and the prayer of any judgment: and now how exactly this hath come to pass in these days, I leave you to witness, who know with what reluctancy and indignation ye first heard me denounce judgment upon the apostasy, and upon ourselves, if we did not repent; who can witness how the great body of the church abhorreth to hear of it; and how, in all their public meetings, in all their reports, and in all their publications, they speak of nothing but universal conversion and millenial blessedness, not only to the apostate nations of Christendom, but to the whole earth, so that truly we are come to that poverty and negation, and I may even say contradiction, of faith, which the Lord representeth as immediately preceding his coming, and the concomitant of those days of wickedness, dark and gross as were the days of Noah and Lot.

The next passage of Scripture to which I would refer you, as proving the same point, that the last days of the present dispensation were to be evil, and not good, is found in the iiid and iiid chapters of the Second Epistle of Peter; in the former of which (verses 1, 2, 3) are described the false teachers and damnable heresies which would bring the truth of God into contempt and raillery of men. And,

giving no hint of any amendment, the Apostle addeth (ver. 3), that "the judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not;" or that it had of a long time been written, and threatened, and hastened to its accomplishment. For the likeness of whose judgment and the parallel of their wickedness ransacking all conditions and events of the world, he findeth none but these three, of Noah, and of Lot, and of the angels which kept not their first estate; and he continueth the description of their wickedness throughout the whole chapter of which I will only notice three characteristics (ver. 18, 19),—the boldness and daring of their language, great swelling words of vanity, and their false promise and pretension to a liberty which is but the slavery of corruption, and their despising government, and speaking evil of dignities. Now whether these be characteristics of the radical and liberal people, who have won and ruled the ascendant of all things, literary, scientific, political, and religious, I leave you to judge, while I proceed with my discourse to shew you that these evil times hold on, and continually grow worse until the Lord comes. This you will observe, by following the context of the iiii^d chapter, where the Apostle first states it to have been the end of his Second Epistle to keep the church in the remembrance of this apostasy, which was to arise and increase in the church until the time of the end. Concerning

which, he saith again (ver. 3), that "there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own inclinations, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" This carries us a point farther than our Lord's gentle, though strong, way of representing the condition of his church before his coming. He contents himself with questioning, whether he shall find any faith surviving upon the earth at the time of his coming as the Judge. But Peter expressly declares that there shall be no faith; and not only so, but that the hope of his coming shall be scoffed at: and he assigns as the reason of this mockery, that they wish all things to continue as they are, or, in other words, they wish the course of nature and the law of cause and effect to continue unbroken and uninterrupted by any interference of the power and majesty of God. And if this be not the cant of all our philosophers and religionists, judge ye. Against this false notion of the perpetuity of the present state of the world, having adduced (ver. 5) the creation and (verses 6 and 7) the deluge, he proceedeth (ver. 9) to declare that the cause of God's procrastination is not indifference to the poor widow's prayer, but the manifestation of his own long-suffering and sparing mercy; and then he declareth (ver. 10) that the day of the Lord should come as a thief in the night, when the household should be all asleep, and no one upon the watch. These two passages from Luke and Peter do beautifully harmonize together in

pointing out the state of wickedness, carnal security and unbelief, yea, and contemptuous scoffing, which should prevail in his church in the last days, and upon which he should come as a thief in the night, as the flood came upon the world in the days of Noah, when they did eat and drink, married wives and were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all;—likewise, also, as it was in the days of Lot, when they did eat, drink, buy, sell, plant, and build; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

Thus, brethren, have I laid before you all, or almost all, the passages where this period of the last latter days is referred to; and brought under your consideration the various mysteries of the Divine Providence which are then to proceed and run their course: and the result of the whole seems, in few words, to be, that “the last days” is a form of expression used to denote the conclusion of that long season of trial and of oppression which the Jewish people were destined to undergo at the hand of Divine Providence; and the troublous morning of that long day, during which they should begin to realize all the blessings of the New Covenant, and to be irradiated with all the glory of Messiah the King;—the latter days, namely, of that long period of time, during which they should be given up to captivity and oppression, and after

which they should find their might again, and come up to the prey in the day of the Lord's vengeance, and of Zion's recompence ; the latter days likewise of that lesser, though also long, period during which the church should be under Antichrist, and at the end of which she should rise in the glory of the resurrection morn.

In improvement upon the subject, I observe, how utterly repugnant to the language of the Holy Spirit used in the Old-Testament Scriptures, it is to interpret the last days of which our text discloseth the fearful character as referring to the last days of the Jewish dispensation, when every thing fell out directly the reverse of all these things which are to happen in the last days of the Holy Scripture. I observe, secondly, how vain it is to refer the last days to the conclusion of the Millennium, long after the Jews are brought in, long after the nations have been all converted, long after wars have ceased, and every other mystery written in the Prophets hath been accomplished : because as the other is far too soon, this is far too late, seeing it is in these very last days that all those things are to be accomplished which draw on the restoration of the Jews, and the blessedness of the whole earth. The last days of the prophet Jacob is a time when all the twelve tribes of Israel are conquering and overturning ; of Balaam, when the sun out of Jacob is scorching up his enemies ; of Daniel, when the Jews are restored

with great distress both of themselves and the nations; of Ezekiel, when Gog and Magog come up against them; of Jeremiah, when Edom and Moab and Israel's captivities are restored; of Hosea, when the chosen seed return to serve David their King and his glory; of Job, when he riseth to look upon his Redeemer; and of Daniel, when he shall stand in his lot. It will not do to bring all these things into being one thousand years before the last days, seeing they are every where declared to happen during these last days. Therefore, thirdly, we are forced to admit that the last days are the shutting in of the present, and the ushering in of that glorious dispensation to which we are looking forward; and being necessarily driven upon this conclusion, we have nothing left for us but to make the best of it; and seeing that judgment is appointed of God in his own wisdom, and deserved by us for our frowardness, yet in his grace revealed before hand, we should do our endeavour to bear in mind how the tide sets, and not say it is flowing to the west, when it is setting directly away from it. But this is exactly the present case of the church, to think that we are steering full sail into the pacific and blessed region of time, when we are hurrying headlong, and as it were absorbed, stern foremost, into the jaws of an almost inevitable whirlpool. How much it is the duty of every man who loves the church, and is convinced of this fatal delusion, to speak out his conviction with all bold-

ness, and warn his brethren with all loving-kindness, I leave you to judge. And this is what I have undertaken, and shall in these discourses prosecute, endeavouring to read upon the face of the times those very characteristics which are here described as belonging to the latter times.

Finally, my brethren, I pray you to observe how distinctly these things are written in the Scripture, how a simple reference to the concordance, and a mere perusal of the texts as they occur, will serve to clear up these prophetic matters over which it is the custom of self-sufficient men to cast so much doubt and ambiguity. I have done nothing more in this discourse than to peruse and set down in order certain texts of Scripture; and yet, I have no doubt, there is hardly a man present, who is not convinced that the events of the last times are, the judgment of the nations or Gentiles for all their oppressions of the saints, the restoration of the Jews, and the glory of the holy mountain, the glorious advent of the Lord, the resurrection of the dead, the blessedness and pacification of the whole earth. And now, though you know not when these days are to come, yet you can give me the more earnest heed while shewing you, as I proceed to do in these discourses, that the clearest evidences of them are even now revealed in the midst of us. These texts of Scripture which we have examined will enable you to confute a whole platform of society orators, who hope and speculate about the future according to their proud imaginations and vain wishes, not

according to the oracles of God : but what is more, it will enable you to do your part to set the deluded people right ; and if not, it will give you the ground of many a mournful complaint unto God, of much sorrow and affliction on account of the blindness of the church. And oh, dear brethren, if these things are so, as we believe them to be, what manner of persons ought we not to be in all godliness and honesty ! How watchful ! how loose to the world ! how ready for our change ! how afflicted for the church ! how hateful of the spirit of Antichrist, which winketh at all abominations ! how desirous of Christ's coming, seeing things are waxing worse and worse ! how true to our trusts, seeing the King is at hand ! how diligent over the house to have it all in readiness ! how very careful of our garments ! how watchful against temptations ! how prepared to resist them ! how wise, how considerate ! how full of faith and holiness ! For, remember, there is a time when the door is shut and no more admission found : a time when there is no more buying of oil ! They could not enter into Noah's ark, who would not be warned by Noah's preaching. And so I believe it will likewise be found, in that day, which shall come as a snare upon all that dwell on the earth. Therefore, give heed to these things, seeing that now, by more than the space of two years, I have given you warning of them. The Lord prepare us and make us ready. And, oh, may that day not overtake us as a thief !

SERMON II.

LOVERS OF SELF, COVETOUS, BOASTERS.

2 TIM. iii. 1.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come: for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters.

THOSE passages which we have examined in our former discourse are sufficient for establishing the general position, that the last times of the church are evil, and not good; apostate, and not faithful; and now for the more particular description of the evil times, we have to request your attention to the text (2 Tim. iii. 1): “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come: for men shall be lovers of their own selves.”

But, before applying these characteristics of the last and perilous times of the Gentile dispensation, to the times in which we live, for your warning and instruction, it is necessary that I should explain a little in what body of men it is that I would identify them as being present. The body in which I would identify them as being present, is the Christian church; by which I mean all that have been baptized into Christ, and

have not afterwards been excommunicated from the body : in which body I include the apostate Papacy, the Anti-Christian Protestantism, which denies the Divinity of Christ, and the Church which still standeth on the true foundation ; and of this last I allow no arbitrary divisions into the religious world and the professing world, but include the whole community of the baptized : in one word, the whole of Christendom, all the believers in Christ as the last revealer of God's will, all the baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, whether they believe these persons of the blessed Trinity to be equal or not ; whether, indeed, they believe them to be persons or not. The Lord, and his Apostles, looking forward, prophesied into what state this community of believing Gentiles would come in the last days. And here is the description of their state before us in the text. And I now assert that this very state hath been realized, or is fast realizing. Which I undertake to exhibit to your conviction, chiefly with the view of warning you and instructing you against the evils with which we are surrounded ; not the less to be avoided because they are disguised, and concealed, and the very reverse is generally believed. I must therefore look into the Christian church widely and largely ; and if there be any province of it which claims, and hath in a manner established for itself an exemption from these characteristics of the whole, it will be the more necessary to shew their application there, in order that

you may see that these characteristics of the last times are all before us, that we are living in the midst of their wickedness, and that their perils are all around us;—to shew, I mean, that the religious world hath no such exemption as they put in for, but are themselves under the evil influence, less observable perhaps, by being more disguised, but truly the same in principle and in working.

This first feature of character, commonly known by the name of selfishness, we consider as the general characteristic of the times, out of which the others come, as it were, by natural generation. For as the love of God produceth all pious dispositions and the love of our neighbours, all noble and generous dispositions of the soul, so doth the love of self engender all narrow, contracted, malicious, envious, and cruel dispositions of the natural man. Now that this selfishness, which is to be the mother affection of the perilous times which are to come in the last days, appertaineth to the church, and not to the heathen world, is manifest from the last trait which is given; “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof;” as also from the whole of the chapter which describes an apostasy from the faith, and not an ignorance or disbelief of Christ. It is further to be remarked, that this is not the apostasy described in the ivth chapter of the First Epistle, which consisteth chiefly in hypocrisy, falsehood, and delusion, voluntary abstinences and impositions of the will of man; whereas the perilous condition

here described, is the breaking up of the ordinances of religion and the restraints of social life. Now, whether such an age of selfishness hath been introduced into the world, I ask you not to take my judgment, or the judgment of any other man, but do refer you to the writings of all moralists and politicians, who have touched upon the spirit of the times since the French Revolution; but this will come out more clearly, as we proceed with the details.

As our chief object is to be practical, and to guard you against these the characteristics of the last time, in which we believe that we are now living, we would put you on your guard against this evil root of an evil tree, described in the words, "Men shall be lovers of their own selves," by recalling to you what an entire abjuration it is of the Gospel of Christ, which teacheth us to deny ourselves, and to love God only, because he only is good and worthy of our love,—yea, not only to deny ourselves, but to abhor ourselves in dust and ashes, as those who have rebelled against God, and crucified the Lord of glory, vexed the Holy Spirit from the day of our baptism, and gone well nigh to quench him utterly. There is not such a diabolical principle as the love of self: the love of the world hath something that appeareth generous, however much it may degenerate into vanity; it carrieth us out of ourselves, and may sometimes, yea doth oft, exalt us above ourselves, to the love of others, and to the desire of their well-being, to the neglect and even in

defiance of our own. But to be taken up with ourselves, however noble we may be in our faculties and powers, is so utterly to abuse the gifts of the Creator for his service, and to deny our fallen and wretched condition by nature, which calleth for tears and grief, rather than for delight and enjoyment ; it is also to betray such ignorance of the immortal crown and glory to which we are to be advanced from the dust and ashes of the present life ; and withal it is so foreign from the self-denial, self-resignation, and self-humiliation of Christ, and so much akin to the self-adoration and vain-glory of Satan, who would exalt his seat above God, that I know not in what way any man can offend against so many great principles of the truth, and confederate himself with so many great principles of falsehood, as by giving himself up to this passion of self-love. Yet, all base and heinous as it is, that it is possible for the church of Christ to come under its dominion, is manifest from the express declaration of Paul, made to the Philippians, with respect to the Church at Rome, “ For I have no man like-minded who will naturally care for your state : for all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s.” And that the saints of every church are to be cautioned against it, is manifest from these other words of Paul, addressed to the Roman church, “ We then that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves : let

every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification : for even Christ pleased not himself." And the powerful motive against selfishness, which is derived from the example of our Lord, he thus more largely presenteth to the Corinthian church : " For the love of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead : and that he died for all, that they which live, should not live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them and rose again." Until a believer be brought into the condition of seeing himself as only a member of the one mystical body of Christ, and feeling for the rest as he feeleth for himself, and for Christ the Head in all things, and, through him, for the glory of the invisible Father, he is not perfected in his Christian calling : and, according as he can renounce all outward things, and himself also, he becometh a disciple of Christ. Not, brethren, that thereby our personality is lost and absorbed, but rather found again, and disengaged from the bondage and oppression of selfishness, which is not the first but the second, not the original unfallen but the secondary fallen state of the creature, made originally not for itself, but for the manifestation and enjoyment, the worship and the service, of God. This, our original primitive condition, it is the purpose of God to restore, with all advantages of the revealed Son, and the indwelling Spirit : and previous thereto it is necessary to divest us of that diabolical feeling

of self-sufficiency and independency upon God, and other creatures; which, as it is the greatest of falsehoods, so it is the most fruitful source of misery. How far the church hath plunged back again towards this the coast of hell, you will see more in the sequel: meanwhile I exhort you against it, and urge these grave considerations for your meditation.

Having glanced at the operation of this principle of selfishness, in what is commonly called the world, but which we consider to be a true, integrant, and responsible part of the church of Christ, we are now to shew its application to the religious world; for of its application to the commercial and political world no one entertaineth a doubt. Within the last forty or fifty years, from the time that the late revival of religion began to take effect, the personal hath become every thing, the common almost nothing. The state of our own souls, the only question; the state of the church a very secondary one, if a question at all. In respect to preaching, the consideration hath been, How did it bear upon myself? not, how did it bear upon the glory of Christ? How felt I? not, how accorded it with the truth of the orthodox faith? Hence arose that substitution of frames and feelings for the sacraments and ordinances of the church, to which our fathers were wont to look, and that preference of exciting and rousing declamations, to the opening of texts and doctrines of the Scriptures. The patient perseverance of our fathers to set forth the truth, and separate it on every side from the error,

hath given way to a certain loose indifference to the truth, and regard only to that which doth us good. Men speak of a sermon in the same language, and perhaps with the same gesture of the hand, smiting the body in the same place, with which they speak of a dinner. 'It did me good, sir; I felt the better for it.' Against all which, the selfish or personal form that religion hath taken within the last thirty or forty years, I object not in its place, but grieve that it should have usurped the whole, and eclipsed the person of Christ, or eclipsed it all save that fragment which every one can apply to himself; that it hath extinguished the love and admiration of the purpose of God, as a manifestation of his own being, and of his work as an accomplishment of his own glory, and turned it all into a plan or scheme for doing so much good to so many men; and, moreover, that it hath broken up the unity of the church, and destroyed the subordination of its several members, and extinguished the sacredness of the ordinances, and the communion of the body of Christ, the oneness of Baptism, the oneness of the Spirit, and rooted out that charity of every one to every other one, in our several places and offices in the body, which maketh amongst us but one body complete by our cooperation and communion; that it hath brought in the reign of judgment, every man thinking his brother should be like himself, as if we were so many coins struck with the same die, instead of being so many members belonging to the same body, yet inspired with the same

Spirit. Now, this is the work of exactly the same selfish spirit in the religious world that we all acknowledge to be in the professing world; or, to keep our own language, it is the demonstration of the universality of the spirit over the whole church; for we can make no distinction among the baptized, but consider them all as being equally privileged, and equally responsible. Against which spirit of selfishness, brethren, we would guard you, by bringing to your mind that religion is not for our own glory, but for the glory of God; that it is not for our own personal profit, but for the honour and profit of Christ; not for our own wellbeing, but for the wellbeing of the spiritual church, that we should consult in the first and principal degree. And my assurance to you is, that by looking upon yourselves in the second or the third place, your own wellbeing will prosper far more than by taking the view which is commonly taken.

Into this, however, I cannot enter further at present, and must hasten to touch the second characteristic,

COVETOUSNESS;

that is, the desire of possessing that which we have not, and attaining unto great riches and worldly possessions. And whether this be not the character of trade and merchandize, and traffic of every kind, the great source of those evils of over-trading which are every where complained of, I refer to the judgment of the men around me, who are engaged in the com-

merce and business of life. Compared with the regular and quiet diligence of our fathers, and their contentment with small but sure returns, the wild and wide-spread speculation for great gains, the rash and hasty adventures which are daily made, and the desperate gamester-like risks which are run, do reveal full surely that a spirit of covetousness hath been poured out upon men within the last thirty or forty years. And the providence of God corresponding thereto, by wonderful and unexpected revolutions, by numerous inventions for manufacturing the productions of the earth, in order to lead men into temptation, hath impressed upon the whole face of human affairs a stamp of earnest worldliness not known to our fathers: insomuch that our youth do enter life no longer with the ambition of providing things honest in the sight of men, keeping their credit, bringing up their family, and realizing a competency, if the Lord prosper them, but with the ambition of making a fortune, retiring to their ease, and enjoying the luxuries of the present life.

Against which crying sin of covetousness, dearly beloved brethren, I do most earnestly call upon you to wage a good warfare. This place is its seat, its strong hold, even this metropolitan city of Christian Britain; and ye who are called by the grace of God out of the great thoroughfare of mammon, are so elected for the express purpose of testifying against this and all other the backslidings of the church planted here; and especially against this, as being in my opi-

nion, one of the most evident and the most common of them all. For who hath not been snared in the snare of covetousness? Which of us all hath not envied our neighbour his large and prosperous business, hath not coveted his happy security from risk, and immunity from the fluctuations of the market? Which of us hath not desired wealth, and set our heart upon a goodly estate? Ah! what young man hath not longed to be a partner in the house whereof he was but a hired servant; and, being advanced to be a junior partner, hath not calculated the years when he shall be able to return to his home with a certain competency, on which he may take his ease?—My dearly beloved brethren, while I set these most natural propensities forth as to be guarded against, it is because they are abused of Satan to carry your heart away from God, the great dispenser of events, the disposer of providence, the giver of every good and perfect gift. The hope of such prosperity may be entertained: no one is excluded from the enjoyment of it: “for godliness hath the promise of the life which now is, as well as of the life which is to come.” These things you are not only permitted to expect, but they are expressly promised to you, upon condition that you first renounce them; and that not in the same measure in which you have renounced, but a hundred fold, even in the present life. Yea, so sure are you made of this, that our Lord dischargeth you from even thinking of them

at all, "seeing your heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of these things." But it is the desiring them, out of God; the labouring for them, not in the Lord; the receiving them in the spirit of selfishness, not in the Holy Spirit. This is the covetousness which the Apostle pronounceth to be idolatry; "and covetousness, which is idolatry;" that is, the idolatry or worship of the creature, the love of it, the desire of it, and the entertainment of it, as if it were our chief good, our God which we worshipped. And, ah! my beloved friends, how oft it is so, be ye my witnesses, who have many a time in godly sincerity confessed and lamented to me, that the worldly thoughts and transactions of the day would interpose between your soul and God in your family and private devotions, and oft, even on the Sabbath, in this house of worship, you could with difficulty drive them away from harassing your thoughts and interrupting your devotions. What counsel can I give you against this sin of covetousness, so complete, so graphical, and so appropriate as that which our Lord offered, upon the request of the man who besought him to ask his brother to divide his inheritance with him. To whom the Lord, having signified his unwillingness to interfere in such matters, spake these words against covetousness, which I pray you to read along with me. Luke xii. 15—22: "And he said unto them, Take heed and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not

in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully : and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits ? And he said, This will I do : I will pull down my barns, and build greater ; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods : and I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years : take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee : then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided ? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God. And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat ; neither for the body, what ye shall put on." Which word having spoken in reproof of the covetous world, or professing church, he addeth for the instruction of his disciples, or true believers, those words to which I have already alluded : shewing them how, with minds intent upon far higher things, even the kingdom of heaven, and its righteousness, they should leave all those lesser and necessary things, with full faith that they would not be withheld by that Father of theirs who, in giving them his only begotten Son, would, with him, freely give them all things.

And now to shew how this characteristic ap-

vetousness, in the former part of the discourse, stand for these evangelical forms of the evil also. And now, having done this office, lest the religious world should plead not guilty, I proceed to follow out the other evil characteristics with which the Spirit chargeth the last perilous times, and to shew their real existence in the midst of ourselves.

BOASTERS.

This is another fruit of self-love, to boast in our gifts and possessions, and to acknowledge them as due only to ourselves, and derived from no foreign source. "My hand hath gotten me this. Who is lord over me?" And its existence is evidenced amongst us, at this present time, by our casting off the acknowledgment of God's hand in the administration of providence. Compare the histories of a former century, with the histories of this;—compare the thanksgivings and fastings, and other acts of pious acknowledgment of God in public affairs, with the total disregard and discontinuance of such ordinances, and the imputation of every thing prosperous to the wisdom of our councillors, to the bravery of our soldiers and sailors, and other selfish causes;—compare the spirit and the letter of all legal and commercial documents made in former times, with those which are drawn up now, and observe the spirit of irreverence which we feel for these venerable forms of our fathers;—finally, compare the deep humility

and loud lamentations of our fathers over the evil character of their times, with the self-sufficient commendation and garrulous boasting of the enlightened character of these above all former times; and you will at once discover how boastfulness, as well as covetousness, hath grown upon us of this generation, beyond all former example or precedent in a Christian land.

Now, touching this characteristic of the church in these times, which is boasting, we have very much to say in every application of it. First, as it beareth upon your worldly estate, it is the natural consequence of covetousness. For if in acquiring we have been covetous, then in possessing we will be boastful; but if in procuring we have been pious and dutiful towards God, then in possessing we will be humble and considerate of his ends in bestowing. Envy is the parent of boasting; envious till we reach the goal of our wishes, boastful over those who have not yet attained unto the same mark.—The just remedy of boasting, therefore, is to pursue with patience the race set before us, as being called to it of God, and not with headlong violence to precipitate ourselves along it, as if it were chalked out by ourselves. It is the disbelief of God's providence, in our particular lot, which draweth down upon us the judgment of these evil passions and affections of the mind. Be temperate therefore, in your pursuit of riches, and be considerate in your use of them: remembering

the word of the Lord, "that we should make friends unto ourselves of the mammon of unrighteousness, who when we fail may receive us into everlasting habitations." In the other respects which boasting hath,—as, for example, that the condition of our age of the church is so much better than those which are past,—I can do nothing but lift up my hands at the delusion which the enemy hath brought us under. This will come to be more thoroughly considered under the eighth particular, of the "unholiness" of these times. But I may now entreat you, for the remedy of this evil, to consider your own hearts, and see whether they attain to that region of holiness to which the saints of old attained, to consider your brethren, to consider the ministers of the church, to consider the books which they write, and the many much-trumpeted works of charity which they do. Every one's right hand knoweth what his left hand doeth. Our charities are written down and published with our names and surnames: our acts are set forth in public reports and proclaimed at market crosses. And, in short, there wanteth nothing to complete the parallel between us and the ancient Pharisees: yet are we boastful of the age. Oh! my brethren, as you value the truth of Jesus, and would receive his meek and lowly person, I pray you to testify against the evil spirit of boastfulness which hath so transported the church into the region of folly and absurdity. But, granting we were

so highly advanced above all comparison, what have we that we have not received; and who made us to differ? And I warn you, above all, against boasting of the enlightened age, which is nothing short of advancing Satan's glory, as the bright archangel of liberality, above Christ the bright and the morning star. For any one to say that we are more enlightened than our fathers in divine, moral, and political truth, is to say that the age of infidelity is more bright and glorious than the age of religion. And the more be ye upon your guard against all these the forms of boasting, as everywhere it is held out in the Holy Scriptures as a characteristic of the last times. (Psalm x. 3.) "For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth." In which Psalm, the destruction of the last anti-Christ is the subject; and in Psalm xlix. 6, wherein the end of the dispensation immediately preceding the morning of the resurrection is the subject, they are described as "trusting in their wealth, and boasting themselves in the multitude of their riches." And, in the xith chapter of the Romans, where the casting out of the Gentiles is foretold, it is shrewdly signified, that it was to come from boasting. "Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear." And, in the second chapter of Peter's Second Epistle, already re-

ferred to, this vain-boasting is represented as one of Satan's chief snares in the latter times : " For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from those who live in error." On all accounts, therefore, dear brethren, I do greatly discourage you from taking any part in this spirit of boasting, and carnal security which is gone abroad, and rather to exercise yourselves in honesty, and intercession, and supplication ; and let this year continue and end, as it was begun amongst us, in lowliness of mind, in sorrow, in affliction, and in fasting, for the forlorn estate of Christ's church. Oh how glad were I that God would yield to us among the churches the distinction of being continually girded with sackcloth and covered with ashes!

SERMON III.

PROUD, BLASPHEMERS.

2 TIM. iii. 1, 2.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come: for men shall be.....proud, blasphemers.

THIS is another fruit of self-love, consisting in the conceit of those distinctions which God hath bestowed on us, and the use of them to our own and not unto his glory, and whether this, also, be not a character of the times in which we live, I refer to your own observation and honest judgment. Cast your eyes backward, and remember the character of the various ranks and distinctions of life: how much more condescension there was of the higher to the lower; how much more obligation was felt from the rich to the poor; how much more devotedness unto God shewn forth in the charitable foundations, for the advancement of education, for the bringing forward of the gifted youth in humble life, for lectureships in churches, and for the erection of churches themselves! To men who are not acquainted with this field of observation it may seem that

the stateliness of former times betokened more pride than the easy familiarity of the times in which we live. But pride consisteth not in the assertion of our proper place and rank in life: this is the use of our dignity, and not the abuse of it. I know and lament that the outward signs and symbols of rank have been levelled by the spirit of insubordination and irreverence which is poured out on men; while I believe there never was within this land such an abuse of the gifts of understanding, and the advantages of rank and station to the aggrandizement of self, as there is in these times; and this is pride. Likewise, I believe, that there never was such a barrenness of true condescension and generous sacrifice for the well-being of our inferior dependants, as there is at this time; and this is pride. And if we look to those who consider themselves as being more especially the representatives of the spiritual people of God, we shall find how, in the train of their boasting, pride hath introduced itself, saying, 'Stand off, I am holier than thou: we are the people of God: we are doing the works of God; and all who are not of us are without God, and without hope in the world.' Look how little acknowledgment there is of the church of Christ; how much of independency; how little of subjection; how little discipline; how little deference to authority. The noisy bustling works of a few years which we have wrought eclipse the labours of our fathers. If pride consists in

setting ourselves on high, if pride be the besetting sin of a novice, then I know where it is to be sought. If pride be the comparing of ourselves with others, and the casting of the scale in favour of ourselves, then know I where it is to be found. Nor because it is spiritual pride is it the less, but as I judge the more, hateful in the sight of God. To see no faults in ourselves, to bear the mention of none, to allow of no passing beyond our condition, and to hold all which is higher than we as wicked Antinomianism; to take lessons from no one, and to give lessons to every one; to regard all things according to their bearing upon us, and to favour them according as they favour us: if these be the marks and signs of pride, I know where to find it most triumphant, in these times, even amongst those who are continually speaking of humility. But true humility doth not speak much of itself, but sitteth still and listeneth and learneth. It is generally held that sectarian pride is greatly diminished in these times. I believe the very reverse, that it never raged with more virulence, but that the thick cloak of hypocrisy and expediency hath covered it from our view. There is an universal appearance of charity amongst the sects of the church; but I know that, at bottom, there is little or none. There is, indeed, a great ignorance of those things for which our fathers contended in open controversy, concerning which of course there can be no controversy. And there is a

most culpable indifference towards things which our fathers would have given up twenty lives rather than have surrendered. If such ignorance of points of controversy, and such indifference to points of orthodox faith, are to be accounted as signs of humility, then I will admit the claim of the religious world to humility; but if they be the signs of what they really are—that is, of ignorance and indifference—then will I allow these to be no signs of humility whatever. I am not to be hindered by outward appearances from feeling the pulse, and discovering the state of the circulating life; and I have not found any ground upon which the religious world should be exempted from the wholesome inspection of the ministers of the Chief Physician; and after looking upon it for many years, and having close intercourse with it, I give it freely as my opinion, that covetousness of much money, that boasting of many doings, and that pride in what they are able to do, are as plentiful and even redundant there as in the great body of the church, whom they by implication consider as the irreligious world.

Dear brethren, in thus identifying the last times with the times in which we live, I have two objects continually in view: the first, to shew how near we stand to the judgment and advent of the Lord; the second, to warn my flock against the subtle temptations of the enemy, and to instruct you how to avoid them. For if the day be near at hand, it is high time

that every poor servant like me were setting the house in order for the reception of the Son and Heir, the great Lord and Master. Now, then, how are you to be preserved from this spirit of pride which is gone forth? By continually bearing in mind, that of the seven things which the Lord hateth, a proud look is by pre-eminence the first; that it is the way to fall into the snare of the devil: "Lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the snare of the devil;" that it is the way to stem the flowing current of Divine grace, and turn it against you: "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." And while you bear in mind how very hateful it is in the sight of God, avoid that spirit of selfishness and sectarianism out of which it springs, regarding yourselves ever as unworthy members of Christ's one body, which is the one catholic apostolical church; a subject of faith, and not an object of sight. And while you thus believe, suffer not Satan thereby to withdraw you from your subjection and dutifulness to that visible church of which you are members; for every one must be a member of some visible church, either by the tacit acknowledgment of his baptism, or by the avowed preference of some other communion. This is Satan's trick with the religious world, to get them to undervalue the outward visible ordinances, offices, and canons of their several churches, under the fond conceit that they are thereby honouring the one invisible church

the more : as if one should honour the whole human race the more by trampling under foot the body of his mother ; as if that invisible church could for a century exist, or were intended for a single day to exist, without the outward and visible signs of its existence. And so Satan having got them to undervalue and neglect the orders of their several communions, hath them in this fine dilemma, either of submitting and professing adherence to that which they understand and value not,—which is hypocrisy ; or else to deliver themselves from subjection and subordination into the wildness of their own opinions and inclinations, which is the sure way to pride and destruction ; as it is written (1 Tim. vi. 3, 4), “ If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness ; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness : from such turn away.” Therefore, while I exhort you to hold fast the one catholic and apostolical church, whereof Christ is the Head, and all saints are the members, as the great object of faith and love and hope, the pillar and ground of the truth, I do not the less exhort you never to lose sight of the Church of Scotland as the object of sight, or the symbol for helping the conception of faith, and in honour-

ing which you will attain to the honour of the church invisible, just as by honouring and believing in the symbol of baptism, you attain unto the grace which is therein contained. Nor is it good for us to be without sister churches, whom we may love; nor to be without superior authorities in the church, to whom we may yield subjection: the opposite condition is the inlet to all sectarianism, schism, and dissolution. Therefore be in subjection, studiously strive to be in subjection, to the ordinances of the church; to attain unto her doctrines, to practise her discipline, to enter into her worship. And then shall you be more effectually guarded against the spirit of pride, than if I were every month or every week to read you a lecture on humility. Pride is the refusal of a superior power; and to acknowledge a superior power is to do away with pride. And what superior power hath a Christian, as a member of the church, to acknowledge but the government which Christ hath placed in his church?

BLASPHEMERS.

To identify this as a bad characteristic of our times beyond any age which this island hath seen since the time of her recorded history, requireth, alas! few words to be said in the hearing of a London congregation, which daily witnesseth, and should daily grieve over, the numerous forms and open avowals, yea, and proud gloryings, with which

the blaspheming of God and his church doth utter itself in all quarters of the city; and not of the city only, brethren, nor the infected neighbourhood of the city, but the whole country, which is regularly pervaded by the agents, and regularly served with the works of blasphemy. Oh! how gross, how shameless, how impious, are the blasphemies which are daily vending throughout this land; yea, and how close and frequent the intercommunication between this city and our neighbour capital, where blasphemy arose and reigned some thirty years ago! I am no terrorist, having faith in God, blessed be his Name! and, I trust, am not afraid of what man can do against me; but sore grieved in heart and spirit to see this characteristic of the perilous times beginning to be branded upon the face, and over the body of my native land. I have an indignation at it, and I wish to impart the same indignation to you: for to hear your speeches, one would think you pitied rather than hated the blasphemers of God; that you pitied their stripes and imprisonments, rather than rejoiced that the constitution of the land did still possess vigour and power enough to lay hold upon and chastise them. I have lived to hear a British house of commons receive a petition for the open toleration of blasphemy without a murmur. O God, restore the zeal of thy people for the honour of thy holy Name!

This is that blasphemy which all acknow-

ledge, and from which the church will readily acquit herself: but I say she cannot acquit herself, while those who utter it are not excommunicated from her body. Those churches, whoever they be, which baptized these loud and large blasphemers of the name of God, whose mouth is set against the heavens, and their tongue walketh abroad over the whole earth, and which suffer them to go on without any sentence of excommunication pronounced against them, are in the sight of God guilty of all these acts, and for them do suffer the loss of his Spirit and the hidings of his countenance.

But there are two other kinds of blasphemy, which in the sight of God are hardly less hateful: the one the Papal blasphemy, and the other the Arian, Socinian, and Unitarian. The former I regard as a blasphemy, by the authority of many texts. In the first place, in the viith of Daniel, the fourth beast, because of the voice of the great words which the little horn spake, "is slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame." And what short of the most daring blasphemy could bring such a direful judgment, I know not. Secondly, in 2 Thess. ii. 4, that wicked one is declared to sit as God in the temple of God, "shewing himself that he is God." And if that be not blasphemy, I know not what it is. But, thirdly, in Rev. xiii. 6, he is said to open "his mouth in blasphemy against God; to blaspheme his Name, and

his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven." Now, of this blasphemy our fathers did effectually close the mouth within this land, by fighting against it with preaching, and secured the ground they made by a series of enactments establishing the church in this land to be a Protestant church until the Lord should come. But we have imbibed a great pity of these blasphemers, and a fellow-feeling with them, and a desire to loose their mouths, and give them unrestrained law; which ariseth, they allege, from a desire to destroy the blasphemy: but, so far as I can judge, it ariseth from an ear grown very dull and insensible to the horrid blasphemies which are uttered. It is a blasphemy-enduring ear which makes our statesmen and our churchmen and our dissenters so ready to take part with these destroyers of the earth. And if this do not fasten a direct charge of blasphemy upon us, it fasteneth the indirect charge of taking part with the blasphemer, of aiding and abetting him in his blasphemous work.

Again, that every form of the Arian heresy is a direct blasphemy against God's name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, no one who understands the nature of blasphemy will doubt. Surely it is blasphemy to say that a Person of the adorable Godhead is a mere man, that the Lord of all is only a creature, and that the Christ hath no power to anoint, the Holy Ghost no virtue of a holy unction.

If these things be not blasphemous, then was it no blasphemy for Christ, if he had been but a man, to call himself God: and if this be not blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, I know not what it is. Now behold how these blasphemers have multiplied amongst us within the last thirty or forty years, and how they have defined and embittered the terms of their blasphemy against the Holy Trinity; and behold how they are endured and tolerated in the high places of the nation, and how our orthodox Dissenters join hands with them in seeking to obtain what they call their civil rights. If it be not a toleration of blasphemers thus to go hand in hand with them, I know not what is. If this do not betoken an ear dull and insensible to the sting of blasphemy, I know not what doth. And if, after this threefold manifestation, any one can doubt that this feature of the last times is realizing itself amongst us no less than the preceding ones, that we are falling more and more from the jealous reverence of God's name, and coalescing with them who have blasphemed it, dipping more and more towards the primitive blasphemy of Antichrist, and harbouring within Christendom more and more stark and strong blasphemers; if this point be not as fully made out as any of the preceding ones, then I forego my faculty of discernment and capacity of demonstration.

Now the question ariseth, how shall we be

defended from this strong inclination of the times in which we live? And the answer is, By a most devout hatred, burning zeal, and wise exercise of all our gifts against these three classes of blasphemers with whom the church swarmeth; most devoutly praying for their downfall and destruction, most diligently seeking by all lawful means to impede and withstand and beat them back. I must perform a good service against them in preaching, you in hearing and believing and witnessing and acting. Nor need you seek occasions: most plentiful occasions shall you find everywhere; for the land swarmeth with the indulgers of blasphemy in some one, if not in all, of these three forms. And in order to suffer in your reputation as a man of good sense and feeling, you have but to signify your dissent from the patient indulgers of all manner of blasphemy. And if you be a stout and valiant soldier for the righteous name of God, you will have plenty of zealots ready to contend with you by all means for the liberty of the subject to blaspheme in what way, and to what extent, he pleaseth. Therefore stand forth, and be men for God; gird you like men, and be strong; for many be those who are confederated against his holy Name.

This much lies ready to your hand in the way of resistance and contradiction; and there is yet a better way, the way of positive and real

sanctification of God's most holy Name. I have to set before you the duty of hallowing and sanctifying it; which is best done by reverently inquiring into the mysteries which are contained under it; mysteries which our religious world think are better left alone, because they have no deep feeling of the power and might of that Name into which we were baptized. But what are we that we should remain ignorant of the Name which hath been named over us? It is a low-minded, mean-spirited, dishonourable lethargy on our part; and towards God, who hath revealed himself to be known, it is the most shameful ingratitude. What else but to know and sanctify his name, doth He continually give throughout the Scriptures as the end of all his mighty acts? If then, to know the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost be so dutiful in us, and acceptable to God, and withal the best antidote to the blaspheming and dishonouring of it, I do entreat you, my beloved, to be earnest in spirit, that God would open and reveal to us in all ways, but especially by his own ordinance of preaching, the mysteries which lie hid in his great Name. Of which mysteries, I have already shewn some that lie enwrapped in that name "Father," and do purpose, when I shall have duly fulfilled this our introduction to a new year, to take up the mysteries shut up in the name of "the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ."

To all which discourses give reverent heed at all times; and above all other subjects, prize the subject of the blessed Trinity; above all knowledge, to know his holy Name; above all service, to worship and magnify it: for in that Name is surely shut up all that man can know, and all that he can desire to know.

SERMON IV.

DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS.

2 TIM. iii. 1, 2.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be.....disobedient to parents.

TO understand the changes which have passed upon the church, it is necessary to transport yourself a generation or two back; and having become familiar with the spirit of that time, so far as can be ascertained from the conversation of old people, and the perusal of written books, the recollection of traditions, and the inspection of other monuments which survive the wreck of time, to draw it into comparison with the spirit of the times in which we live. To the faithful and true striking of this balance, much wisdom is necessary; for in conversing with old people, you must make allowance for the hallucinations of age, and the halo of glory with which the season of youth is surrounded. And in studying the monuments of a former time, it requireth much skill indeed to recompose their fragments into a true picture of the living

and moving persons to whom they belonged. These are the difficulties which attend the right judgment of times past. And to make up a true judgment of times present, there are difficulties of an almost equal amount, though of a very different kind : which are, first, the vanity of our own age, reflected from our own selves, which form part of it ; secondly, the collected vanity of all the living who speak and who write of it ; thirdly, the exaggeration of things near at hand ; and, fourthly, the oblivion of things now gone by : all which together do mightily warp the estimation which men commonly make of the times in which they live. Of all those difficulties which beset our undertaking, I am most fully aware, and desire to bear them in mind, and with the more humility to submit myself to the teaching of the Holy Ghost. For though I have conversed much with old men, and, I may say, delighted to give them reverence, and lived the most part of my youth at their feet listening to their account of former times ; and though my reading and study have been much amongst the writers of the former ages of the church, I am not ignorant that there oftentimes ariseth from this very familiarity with the olden times such an admiration of antiquity, as to make us unjust to the times in which we live. Vanity and pride and malice, also, lead us to identify ourselves with the illustrious dead, in order that through the shade of their greatness we may wound the illustrious living. On all

which accounts, I do feel the task I have undertaken, of shewing these to be the characteristics of the times in which we live above the times of our fathers, or any other times of the church, to be one of a very perilous and responsible kind; and therefore, cleansing myself of all malice or partiality towards the present, and of all predilection to a former age, I desire devoutly to submit myself to the teaching of God's Spirit, and to shew forth unto you what he sheweth unto me.

How far the feature in the text, "disobedience to parents," is a character of the times in which we now live, each one, perhaps, will best settle for himself, by comparing the reverence of his own children, or the children whom he knows, with the reverence which he bore to his parents, or the marks of reverence and obedience which he remembers to have heard his father speak of. For my own part, so far as my means of observation have extended, I can freely declare before God, that the deterioration of the age in this capital point can hardly be over-estimated or over-stated. I call it a capital point, because it is that from which all reverence of a superior floweth as its fountain-head, and in the right occupation of which ariseth all obedience, whether to the magistrate or to God. I do not say that in the nature of things it is before our duty to God; because it is itself secured by the sacrament of baptism, which is a Divine ordinance; but I do

say, that in the order of teaching it comes before the other, seeing God, by the sponsorship of baptism, constitutes parents the teachers of his fear unto their children, and doth require both faith and obedience to proceed, through the medium of our parents, up to him. And certainly, in the order both of knowledge and of practice, as well as of dignity, the obedience of parents standeth before the obedience either of masters or of magistrates, and is so placed in the Ten Commandments which God spake with his own lips. Now, in this rudimental, and, as it were, mother-source of all obedience, which standeth foremost in the text amongst the relative obligations, I say that these last times of the church do indicate a most sad inferiority and degradation beyond all other times of which we have any record. And when I say so, I do not mean to lay the blame upon the children merely, but upon the parents much more; seeing I believe it to be ordained of God that the health and strength of every relationship should depend upon the superior rather than the inferior member, should exist as a grace descending from above before it is as an offering ascending from beneath: whereof he hath given us both the proof and the example, in that he loved us before we loved him, and freely adopted us into the condition of sons out of grace, not out of any respect unto our deserving. In like manner, I believe it is his honour of the higher rank and the elder branch, always to prefer them so far

as to begin the progress of amelioration ; and it is his judgment upon them so to order it that, through their neglect and unfaithfulness, things should fall away into deterioration. It is not, therefore, so much the disobedience of children, as the relaxation of discipline on the part of parents, or rather the general signs of dissolution and breaking up in that most natural and most venerable relationship to which I have to direct your attention. Now I do perceive four great signs and proofs hereof, so large and conspicuous as to be perceptible, and intelligible to every one ; which I lay down before touching upon those of a less conspicuous kind.

The first is, that the legislature has been forced to interfere with an enactment, in order to prevent the children of our laborious poor from being over-wrought to the injury of their health and growth ; a thing which I suppose is unparalleled in the history of Christendom. Yet true it is, that so far, upon the one hand, had the carelessness of parents over the well-being of their children, and, upon the other hand, the covetousness of masters to make gain, extended, that between the two the risk became imminent, and the legislature was fain to interfere, and prevent children from being employed in labour beyond a certain number of hours in the day. I believe that in most instances the root of this most horrid feature of the times is worse than we have represented it, and that it

really arose from the selfishness of the parents, who in good times, being intent upon their lusts, used the labour of their children in order to purchase so much indemnity from labour, and indulgence in the ale-house, to themselves, and, in bad times, used the labour of their children in order to help the straitened circumstances in which the whole family was found; —selfishness, brethren, the selfishness of pleasure and lust, having become too strong for the affections of the father and the mother in the breasts of men. Oh how different this, from the times which every Scotsman above thirty years of age remembereth, and which many parts of our church enjoy still, when parents, being industrious and economical, would pinch themselves to send their children all the year round to the parish school; and look for no labour at their hands, save in the time of harvest, when the fruits of the earth were to be gathered in,—in the view of which all the holydays of the year were brought into that period. But, bating these six, or at most eight weeks, the children went to school the greater part of each day, being content, morning or evening, to do any work which their fathers might want them to assist in. In those times, parents felt it a duty not to impose sore labour, or burdensome tasks upon the infirm and joyous season of youth. The school was thought to be burden enough, after which they were allowed to range about in quest of health and

strength. But now, whenever any work-shop is near, it will be a bribe to half the parish to let their children grow up ignorant of the very grounds of knowledge, in order that the family may profit by their gains.

And mark what the retort is, for such monstrous covetousness, and unnatural bondage. The retort and punishment is, that when the little nurseling of the workshop is able to emancipate himself from his father's restraint, and to earn a livelihood for himself, he doth so the first opportunity, utterly regardless of filial affection to parents, who entwined no affections around his heart, who laboured not, who suffered not for him more than they could avoid. For, brethren, it hath shocked me beyond all description in making my rounds among the poor of this city, to hear them make account of children rather as a burden than a blessing; and when they enumerate the number of the dead, to hear them give God thanks that they were taken away from them, rather than to feel it as an affliction and bereavement sent from his hand. When such children, I say, as have been thus regarded, and thus entreated by their parents, do grow up to the ability of making their livelihood, how often, not in the manufacturing districts of England merely, but in the manufacturing districts of Scotland also; yea, and in the agricultural districts of England, if not of Scotland also, do the young men take up with young women in the same circum-

stances, live in concubinage, form irregular marriages, or otherwise come together in a wicked, hasty, and inconsiderate manner, cast off their parents, and leave them to be supported by public charity. Oh! if there were living amongst our people the ancient sense and feeling of filial obligation, would there, think you, be so many aged parents in the workhouse, or living on the parish?—And this is the second great and striking evidence which I give, that disobedience to parents is the characteristic of the times: for, can that be an obedient son? can he be a son at all? is he not a son that hath made a bastard of himself, who, having wherewithal to support them, shall suffer his parents to be supported by public charity? It is not that I grudge the charity; for how can money be so well employed, as in supporting the aged and the indigent? but that I lament over, and for your warning do point out to you, the weakening and disruption of the ancient strong bond which bound parents to children, and children to parents. The selfishness of the times, which ministers to enjoyment, hath come in to postpone the affection of the parent to the love of gain, and in process of time it cometh in to work the same evil effect upon the love of children in return. So that the question is, how shall we be at the least trouble, and make the most profit of one another?

The third great fact which I have to present in proof of the position, that disobedience to

parents is a strong and striking characteristic of the present times, is the amazing increase of juvenile depredations and felonies, not only in this city, but over the whole country. Surely no parent would wish his child to be disgraced, tried, imprisoned, banished, or hanged; and yet I am told that parents in this city are found degraded enough to send their children to schools where they may be taught the art and mystery of thieving. But, for the honour of human nature, I believe this is rarely to be found; and that the greater part of parents would rather die for their children than see them brought to such ignominy. Of what then is this present great and growing evil of our land a proof? (to such an extent increased, as to be the subject of grave charges by the Judges of the land, who feel called upon, as it were, to take up our office, and point out the failing pillars of society, and the relaxing bonds of moral and religious obligation;)—of what is it, I say, a proof, but that children have no longer that reverence of their parent's commands, nor parents that command over their children, which in times past was sufficient to keep them from the open ways of iniquity? Is not every juvenile delinquent the evidence of a family in which the family bond is weakened and loosened? Is not every dishonest apprentice an evidence of the same? Is not every trustless servant an evidence of the same; every ruined female, every ruined youth, the infinite numbers of un-

ruly and criminal people who now swarm on the surface of this great kingdom, and inundate the streets of this great city, and fill these huge calendars of crime which our Judges and our Juries can hardly find time to dispose of?

The fourth proof which I have to offer of the disobedience of children, or rather of the breaking up of the family obligations, is the frequency of infant schools and Sunday schools, which are necessary interferences of pious men, in order to do what they can to remedy the evil. As the presence of a physician in a house shews me that there is disease; and the number of the physicians in a place, is the evidence of much disease; so the multitude of infant schools and Sunday schools, with other the like inventions of charity, are proofs to me of a diseased and disorganised state of the family bonds. For why should a third party step in to do that which would be as well done without them? And it certainly is the first and great duty of a parent to give religious instruction to his child, as it is the first duty of a child to receive it at his hands. And when another hath to interfere, it proveth, either that the one is incompetent or indifferent, or that the other is unruly and turbulent. And, whichever way it is, it proves the point which we are now examining. Of Sunday schools, the origin is within these forty or fifty years; of infant schools, the origin is within these ten years. They are both considered as great proofs of the improvement of the age: to me they are the

greatest proofs of its decline, and the perfection of such a system would be to destroy itself; that is, to bring about a state of society wherein they should no longer be needed. I do greatly delight that there should be such remedies existing in the church; but I would delight much more that there were no diseases calling for the remedies. For well am I convinced, that in giving into the hands of a third person those pious offices which belong to the parents in virtue of their baptismal engagements, as well as in virtue of natural affection, you do take away the very seed-bed and nursery of reverence and of obedience. The time was, and that not very long gone by, that a Sabbath school of any sort was not known in any parish of our Church. And I hope the time is long distant, that the covetousness of parents or the hardness of times shall force mothers so to labour at a distance from their infants, as to make an infant school necessary. Where they are established, and where they are called for, they do shew me a very great remissness on the part of parents, and a very lamentable ignorance, and most neglected state of the children. But I do not discourage or discountenance such undertakings, while I will not allow them to be quoted as signs of the improvement of the times, but do insist that they are the most striking proofs of the deterioration of the times. For remember, by the Church, I do not mean the religious world, but all the baptized; and it is

the condition of the baptized now, as compared with former times, that I am inquiring into.

Such are four great signs of the increasing disobedience of children, and disorganization of families, which I present to you ; the interference of the legislature to protect children from the covetousness of their parents and masters ; the increase of aged persons cast upon the parish ; the increase of infant depredations ; and the increase of the remedies of infant and Sunday schools ; but concerning this feature of the times, I have so often felt constrained to discourse, for the sake of the families committed to my charge, that I would not now treat of it at all, were it not the solemn obligation which I feel to go the whole round of my text. From that spirit of liberality—as selfishness, changing names, is now designated ; for liberality, in the modern acceptation of the word, is the relaxation of every bond and obligation, that we may follow our own mind, and do our own pleasure ; whereas religion, which is the opposite of liberality, is, as its name importeth, the binding of men over to the faithful performance of common duties, according to the will of God, and the authority with which he hath invested the office-bearers of the church and of the state, who are but Christ's functionaries for the fulfilment of certain portions of his kingly and priestly dignity ;—I say, this spirit of liberality hath invaded the most sacred and inviolate rela-

tionship of parent and child, so as in some cases to have denied the authority and the right of the parent to overrule and sway and direct the faith of his child; which, indeed, would have been a nice question, had it not been set at rest by the ordinance of infant baptism; and amongst the Anabaptists I do find it to be even so, that parents are at a great loss upon this point, and act with great indecision. But though this doctrine was openly broached, and zealously advocated, by Rousseau, that eminent servant of the beast from the bottomless pit, and adopted and acted upon in this land by not a few, yet it is not in the extreme cases alone that I perceive and lament the dislocation and corruption of family ties: I see it in the decline of authority which is daily going on, and which is openly justified, under the pretence that it is not to treat our children like rational beings to require their obedience until they can see and acknowledge the reasonableness of the command; a principle which, notwithstanding its folly and falsehood, hath obtained such an ascendancy, that almost all the school-books and nursery-books which have been written since the French Revolution have been written upon that and upon no other principle,—of which I suppose there be some scores in my own house, presented by the generosity of friends, for the future use of my children,—childish catechisms, childish poetry, and childish stories, which I would not for a moment indulge my child with the perusal of,

being resolved, by the grace of God, to feed them upon the food which will nourish men, which our fathers fed upon ; as the Proverbs of Solomon, the Psalms of David, and the Shorter Catechism of our Church. From this relaxation of parental discipline, from this doubt even of its foundations, doth it come to pass that children who have been brought up within these thirty years, have nothing like the same reverence and submission to their parents which was wont heretofore to bless this Christian land with a reverent spirit to superiors. This is the cause of juvenile depredation : this is a chief cause of the increase of crime, especially amongst children ; of which infant felons, if ye were to banish the present confederacy, you would have within a year as many more to supply it, from the disorganized families of the poor. Hence, also, the trustlessness of apprentices and of domestic servants. It is not that the temptations are increased : there are more locks and bars than there were in our fathers' times ; but it is, that parental discipline and parental instruction is decreased ; that children are fed, but they are not bred ; their bodies are nursed, but not their minds ; they are brought up ignorant of the fear of God, and unacquainted with the restraints of conscience ; the domestication of man's wild spirit is gone ; the blessing of a father and a mother's prayers is gone : and think you that twenty-six letters, or the multiplication table, or the marching and countermarching of Lan-

castrian schools, or even the panacea of Sunday schools, can fill the fasting spirit of a child, or nurse its nature, deserted of a father and a mother's care? Oh, oh! what a burden hath the Lord laid upon his ministers, to stand amidst the wreck of a dissolving society, and, like Canute, to preach unto the surging waves! But we must proceed with our heavy task.

Now, it is as bad, for it cannot be worse, in the higher orders of the community, where children are often as little, yea far less, seen or nursed by their parents, than are the children of the hard-working poor, who, from morning to night, must be at their labours. If, for the children of the poor, so often neglected, charity hath provided the new invention of infant schools, which all admire, without grieving over the desperate disease for which it is a gentle lenative, but not a remedy, then the children of the rich are kept in the nursery, under the eye and training of hired servants, and seldom see the face of their parents. For, if the children of the poor be sent out to toil, and make money, as soon as they are capable of it, then the children of the rich are sent to preparatory schools, and boarding schools, and schools of every description, until the public schools and the universities receive them, whose undisciplined extravagance, ever breaking out into crime, and whose boundless excess ever leading unto ruin, are, in truth, perhaps more than any thing else, the confirmation of what I say, that the evil has gone to as great a height

amongst the higher classes of the community, as amongst the lower. Only witness the licentiousness of young men of rank and fashion in this city, their vanity in dress, their thoughtlessness, and every thing else which betokens that the reins have been given into their hands before they were able to use them. This formerly was a courtier's excess, or the theme of a moralist's satire; now it is a custom which not only swaggers in our streets but speaks out its foppery and folly in our most approved magazines. It is either voluntary relaxation of the reins by the parents, or fierce uncontrollable disobedience on the part of their children. In either case, it proveth the doctrine of the text, that this is a characteristic of the latter times.

And now, though I do not allow the distinction between the religious world and the other world; considering the church, whose minister I am, as alike answerable for both, and counting neither as the world, but both as the covenanted church; yet, because the religious world is for ever taking an exception to themselves from all the blame and censure of the pulpit, thinking in their hearts, 'But we are the people of God: how far otherwise is it with us!' I take upon me to help their eye to discern the beam that is in it;—which I do, first, by observing how little the devotions of the family are enlightened and instructed by the preaching of the word; how little the sacredness of the family hearth is discoursed of, the obligation of family worship, the duty of

catechising our children, with all the other consequences of the baptismal obligation.—I observe, secondly, how little the practice of clerical visitation formeth a part of the Evangelical or Methodist discipline, and how much meetings for conversation, and evening parties of different kinds, have supplanted them. Their's is not the religion of families, but the religion of coteries or parties. The duty is overlooked and omitted, because the principle of it is not known or acknowledged ; I mean, the nature and obligation of baptism, which forms no part of the modern creed of Christian ministers or Christian people. I would lay this down as a test, in any time or any century, of the Christian estate of families, 'What is the importance attached to infant baptism?'—Now, if any one doubts whether this evil be not present in the religious, as well as in the other world, he hath only to reflect upon the opinions of religious men with respect to the subject of baptism ; which, amongst its other excellent effects, doth sanctify the relation of parent and child, by superinducing upon the father the duty of sponsor, and requiring the child to look up to his parent as the link which connecteth him with the church. But, so weak is our faith grown, that fathers, instead of apprehending this privilege which they have under the church, and using it as a means of grace unto their own souls, and a point of advantage from which to exercise parental authority, have allowed it wholly to slip out of their thoughts, and can with difficulty

I would observe another feature of what is called the religious world, which indicates the complete change that hath passed upon this relationship of parent and child since the times of the Reformation. Formerly a father and a mother worshipped with all their children around them. The itching ear was not permitted to carry off one child and another whithersoever they pleased. This act of obedience hath been completely broken up in latter times. A father formerly durst not, upon his responsibility, have permitted his children to go and hear the word where it pleased them. If the ministry was insufficient, they felt that as a family they ought to mourn over it, but as to breaking up and going their several ways, it never was dreamt of. But if there be a characteristic of the present religious world, it is the very reverse of this; a complete breaking up of every obligation, under the powerful acting of that spirit of selfishness, which is the key to the religious as well as the irreligious peculiarities of these times, every one saying, I will go there where I derive the most edification. Would to God it were edification! but how much better were it to substitute the word entertainment. I am not ignorant of the straits into which pious children are brought, by the false doctrine and poor morals which they are obliged to listen to, when seated with their formal parents: nor am I ignorant of the sore penalties and persecutions which a godly child is often forced to submit

to. But these evils upon the other side will not hinder me from heeding this judgment of filial disobedience with which religion in these days is attended.

Finally, the way in which a wise man discerneth this feature of the times most effectually is not from these marks so much, as from the familiarity to which our children are admitted, the want of honour and reverence which they display, the terms of friendship and companionship in which they stand to their parents. And, in short, the general absence of discipline, and controul over their will. We have no official returns of the disobedience of children which generally the delicacy of families hide; but you have only to cast your eye around and look into the domestic history of your neighbours, and those the most religious and spiritual, in order to perceive how lamentably true and strikingly marked is this feature of the times.

Of which, the only cure and remedy, that I can suggest, is to return to the primitive doctrine and discipline of baptism, and to revive, in as much strictness as the church requireth, the duties of the sponsorship; for ministers to make their rounds of pastoral visits as heretofore, and with all scrupulous conscience to open up the duties of the family, to take trial of the proficiency of the children; for elders, in their places, to do the same, with all patient admonition and tender carefulness; but, above all, for fathers of families to surround themselves

with the dignity of Christian parents, and offer with all solemn gravity, night and morning, the prayers of the family ; in short, to feel that they are responsible for a godly discharge of a Christian parent's duty to a Christian child. And then, on the other hand, to require the obedience of the children as a great Christian duty ; not to pass over any shortcoming or neglect, but to look upon it as a transgression of the Divine commandment, which he that standeth in God's place to the incompetent youth should not slight, nor fail to rebuke. For how otherwise shall the child attain unto the grace promised it in the covenant, if not in the way of obedience ? Being disobedient to his parents, he is disobedient to the Head of the Church, and cannot prosper otherwise than by chastisement for the same. A parent should look upon chastisement therefore as God's appointed medicine for disobedience, and the way to faith, which is the way to the attainment of Divine grace. Until these views of the family relationships be taken as the ground-work of all family discipline, the present evil condition of things admits of no remedy, but will grow worse and worse, until the crisis come which will dissolve all things. For a man, by a philosophical speculation, to attempt to shake himself loose from these eternal obligations which the generation that now is, holdeth to the generation before it, and which one rank holdeth to another, and which the whole community holdeth to those

who by their diligence and devotedness in their various trusts, from the king downwards, maintain its rectitude and stability, and which the church holdeth to her bishops and elders and deacons, and other laborious ministers; from those obligations to attempt to free ourselves by some fugitive speculation of universal benevolence and obligation equal and alike to all, is truly the wildest and the wickedest of all attempts, save the attempt to forget or to cancel the obligations we owe to our parents who begat and brought us forth, and stood sponsors for us to the great Head of the Church. And to be delivered from those constant feelings and obligations of gratitude, in a state of liberty and licence, which is most fatal to the soul's health and well-being. And yet how utterly gone it is, in every one of these spheres to which we have directed your attention! Who feels the ancient loyalty to the king, and reverence of the magistrate? who followeth with gratitude the soldiers and sailors who have accomplished the country's defence? The public press hath done us this evil turn of teaching us to regard all these as our hired servants, and to speak of them as if we were their masters; or rather, the ignorant revilers have taught the people to regard their governors as their plunderers, whom they may abuse, and, if occasion serve, displace. And, I am sure, the feeling of ingratitude is still greater towards the rulers of the church. Of every evil that exists in the country and the

church, the fault is at once charged home upon the administrators of both, as if the members were altogether out of the question; as if they could certainly do no wrong. It is either the fault of the laws, or of the administrators of the laws: that it should be the fault of the people, who, in these enlightened times, ever dreameth? Thus it is, that the foundations of gratitude are sapped by the unprincipled writings of unprincipled men, who, not knowing any of the foundations of society, do undertake to sit in judgment, and give forth their verdicts upon every evil which ariseth; being sure, as I have said, to share it into three parts, the badness of the church, of the governors, and of the laws. These things are spoken too late to be attended to: nevertheless I will speak them, were it only for the truth's sake, and were their still less hope of profit than there is. But the ingratitude of servants to their masters is beyond all example, and cannot long exist as it now is, without producing the most fatal consequences. I refer both to domestic servants, and out-of-door servants: of the former there are such complaints, that one would think it were a judgment poured out; while the fearful combinations of the latter which have distinguished these few years are a most lamentable proof that the feeling of gratitude towards those who employ the people is completely obliterated, and a feeling of rankling jealousy and ready revenge planted in its stead; all which our liberal states-

men call 'the march of intellect,' levelling the distinctions of men, and doing away with the need of antiquated restraints. They will find the difference some day, and taste the bitterness and poison of the liquor which they have been so long brewing. I do not speak at present of the want of natural affection on the part of masters, and especially of manufacturing employers, which hath brought them to look upon men as mere tools for making gain, and helped to bring on the reaction of which I complain. That evil will find its place elsewhere under its own head. It is to the ingratitude of the lower to the higher which we are now attending. I leave masters of trades to speak with respect to apprentices, where I have not the same means of information, as in other instances; whether they carry themselves as thankfully as in times past, and whether they be as trust-worthy as heretofore. If I may judge by the complaints which I have heard from those whom I can rely upon, of what has occurred within their own experience and circle of knowledge, I should fear that things are not much better, but that the same spirit hath wrought like a canker here also.

Now the preaching of the truth is the most efficacious means, in God's hand, for the salvation of men, and families, and kingdoms. And according to the faithfulness and completeness of that testimony, will be the fruitfulness of an obedient and blessed people. So that the

chief remedy which I have to recommend, is the enlargement of our office, into its ancient liberty of dealing freely and fully with all the duties of life, as an offering of our faith, the true and willing offering of our faith, unto Christ our Lord and King. When I shall hear the doctrine of atonement turned to continual use, instead of being presented as a continual lullaby to conscience, and indulgence to infirmity;—when I shall hear the sermon carry with it somewhat of the full information of right principle and duty which our fathers expected in it; instead of being a mere excitement to the nerves, or entertainment to the taste, or indulgence to the lethargy of well-disposed and well-meaning people,—then I shall look for a revival of the feelings of obligation, and a strengthening of the bonds of social life. But while they deal in evanescent frames and feelings, instead of resting upon the substantial work of Jesus, and the fruits of the Spirit, as the grounds of their consolation and assurance in the faith; while they address themselves entirely, or almost entirely, to the personal or selfish question of one's own salvation, instead of shewing forth God's glory, Christ's kingdom, and the Spirit's temple of the elect church, they will only produce a selfish character in those whom they convert, and turn them away from those relationships, in the right occupation of which so much of religious duty consisteth. It is the absorption of the Gospel of the kingdom

into one or two doctrines, and the application of this continually to the individual, which is permitting these evils to grow in the church.

But, while I give the example of a generous devotion to the whole church, I must not forget my own flock; and, therefore, to the children here present I address myself, as their pastor, to teach them, that through their parents they are to expect the grace of God to come unto them. As for the faith of their parents they were admitted into the church, so while they are yet in their nonage, and not admitted to the Lord's table, it is through their parents that they are to expect instruction, admonition, reproof, rebuke, correction, and whatever else is necessary to the saving health of the soul. And no one overlooking or despising this nearest ordinance of God, may hope to profit from the more remote one of the ministry of the word, or of the word itself. I pray you therefore, young men, to look upon your parents not only with the strong affections of nature, but with the sanctified affections of religion, and to make very much of their persons and their instructions, and through them to expect the blessings of the baptismal covenant to be conveyed. And of this I am sure, that if a parent have faith, through him it will be conveyed; for God doth not make his ordinance void. And it is not for a child to judge his parent, but to reverence the authority of God's ordinance of sponsorship, and the church's authority which

appointed him to that office. Furthermore, I entreat children, whether in nonage or full-grown, and admitted to the Lord's table, to be in subjection, and to learn from the example of Christ, who, though a Son, learned obedience by the things which he suffered.

SERMON V.

UNTHANKFUL.

2 TIM. iii. 1, 2.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be unthankful (not eucharistical).

THE word in the original for "unthankful," which is the next characteristic of the last and perilous times, and the kindred words *thankful*, and *thanksgiving*, and *thank*, are in the Scriptures of the New Testament applied to God, being a word in the superlative degree, immediately derived from a root which is rendered "grace." And when the word "thank" is applied to men, as in the parable, Luke xvii. 9, "Doth he thank that servant?" it is not the same word, but altogether another form of expression; literally, "Hath he grace or favour to that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not." The word *grace*, here used in the simple degree, when applied to our fellow-men is always used in the superlative degree, when applied to God;

and, instead of being construed with another verb, is itself formed into a verb, which giveth it much more intensity. Now, we all know that grace is the opposite of debt, or work, from Rom. xi. 6: "And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace;" signifying that pure bounty to the undeserving and the sinful, which hath appeared unto all men in the great work of God for the salvation of his enemies, and which all Christians are required to shew forth towards their enemies. Or rather I should say it is that mood of the Divine Mind different from—far higher than—justice, in which he hath appeared to us in the Gospel; and for the manifestation of which in the world of wickedness he hath called out his church under the Gospel, as he formerly called out his church under the Law for the manifestation of righteousness. This is grace, "to forgive our enemies, to do good to them that hate us, and to pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us." This is justice, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." Now, of this mood of the mind called *grace*, the word *thankful* and *thanksgiving* is the superlative degree, with the addition of a particle "well," still more to increase its force of kindness. And the word *unthankful* is the same superlative with the negative particle. These words being thus formed upon the root of "grace," when applied to God, must signify not an act of acknowledgment merely, but a

high, the very highest, degree of that affection of grace which we are called upon to bear unto all men; being in truth the effluence of that Holy Spirit of grace back again to the Father through Christ, which from the Father proceeded upon us through Christ. The inspiration, the utterance, the action of that Spirit of Christ in us, which first shewed itself in him. The high exaltation of the soul unto the measure of the fulness of the grace which dwelt in our Lord Jesus Christ. The word, from its wanting a kindred word in the English tongue, hath been adopted into it, and applied to that highest act of acknowledgment, thanksgiving and love, which a Christian acteth towards God in the Lord's Supper, which is therefore called 'the eucharist.' When the Apostle requires thanks to be made unto God for all men, or when he offereth them for himself, it is "eucharists." And the expression in our text, "unthankful," is "uneucharistical." Now, the word "eucharistical" is used in the best English authors to denote that part of God's service which consisteth in acts of thanksgiving, and is distinguished thereby from the word "thankful," which is proper to man as well as God, whereas "eucharistical" is proper to God only. And the word in our text is "not eucharistical," or "uneucharistical;" that is, in the last times men shall be remarkably devoid of that grace of the Spirit which lifteth them into an eucharistical frame of soul, and

enableth them to abide in thanksgivings unto God and acts of grace towards men.

I make these remarks upon the root and formation of the word, because, from being isolated in the text, there is no other means of ascertaining its exact meaning; and because I found that what I had first thought, and put down upon the subject, went upon the ordinary idea of 'grateful,' or 'thanks,' as being some repayment, or return, for favours received, in words or in affections equivalent for the good acts shewn to us. For, if I mistake not, brethren, the word *thanks* or *thankful* hath changed its meaning, to signify a requital of the favour done us, instead of being an expression of the sense of it; or, it is the sense of an obligation under which we lie at some future time to requite it. If this be the ordinary meaning of "thankful," then it will not at all serve as an equivalent for the original word Eucharistical, which signifyeth the state of soul produced by a sense of grace received, and the expressions or utterances of that state of soul, without the slightest intermixture of the idea of debt or repayment, which mars the whole. For grace and debt are opposites, and cannot come together, but shun one another. And the man who, having received a grace, thinketh directly how he may requite or repay it, knows what justice is, but hath not an idea of what gratitude is; for gratitude and justice are also opposites, as grace and debt are. Now, the diffi-

culty which I know you all feel, in apprehending what I mean, is at once the proof to me of the uneucharistical or unthankful character of the times, and the argument for going into this matter with some degree of exactness. I shall therefore first endeavour to describe and set forth at large, what is the state of the soul signified by "eucharistical," or "thankful," and then shew you how eminently the church in these times is alienated from the same.

To have the true and full apprehension of this attribute of spirit, you must turn away from man wholly, and look upon the Father of spirits, who hath given the great demonstration of this attribute of spirit in the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. You must consider from what feeling in the Godhead, the salvation of sinners floweth, in order to comprehend the force of the word "eucharistical." That feeling was not righteousness or justice, of which the proper demonstration unto a creature that had defrauded the Creator of its service, would have been annihilation, had not some other attribute than justice existed in the Divine Mind. That feeling was not requital, or recompence, or revenge of any kind, which would have gone beyond justice, and added an act of injury commensurate with the act of injury which had been done. What feeling was it then which moved God to stay the judgment and the revenge which is proper to a creature that had sinned; to continue him in life; to bestow upon him the

promise of an eternal, and eternally blessed life; to seal the promise with the gift and earnest of his Holy Spirit; to bring men out of the fallen world, into the state of the elect church; to reward the separate soul with paradise; and at the resurrection to give them the fellowship of the kingdom and glory of Christ? From what feeling in the Divine Mind proceedeth this infinite series of unspeakable bounties towards those who had deserved nothing but the very reverse of them all? I answer, that feeling is grace; and if you would understand what grace is, you must look at it in the will of God, to give his only begotten Son,—in the love of the Son, to be given for a sacrifice,—and in the work of the Holy Ghost, to carry the same into effect to the utmost bounds of the everlasting covenant;—then will you understand what is grace in the Divine Mind.

Furthermore, if you look upon the acts which flow from this Divine disposition of grace, acts which have no other origin than the disposition within, and no other end than to express the same; which desire no return, as they have no cause, from without, but go forth to produce whatever their law of working is in itself capable of producing, then these acts of grace may properly be termed eucharistical or thankful. But as it is usual to apply the term *gracious* unto him from whom the first act of grace proceedeth, and the term *eucharistical* or *thankful* to him upon whom they proceed, it is necessary, in

order to see the eucharistical or thankful parts of the grace, to look from the Unity of the Godhead, to the Trinity of persons, and to behold it in Christ, the great Head of the regenerated and worshipping creatures. His life in the flesh, and his life in glory, are the great manifestations of eucharistical acts, as the purpose of the Father's will is the great spring of grace from which they proceeded. And what were these acts of the only-begotten Son, which succeeded upon the disposition of grace which was found in the Godhead? They were his sacrificing the prerogative and beatitude of his Father's bosom, where he had dwelt from all eternity, to take upon him the burden and the cares of the headship of the church, and the government of all created things; to preach God, and to shew him forth unto the creatures, and to guide the worship of the creatures, and sustain their blessedness. This act of the Son's coming out into manifestation, for the manifestation of the Father, I do regard as the great eucharistical act, and the parent of all other acts of the like kind in the creation; even as I regard the purpose of the Father as the great act of grace, which is the parent of all other acts of grace in the creation. The great humiliation into which he came down to the very lowest prostration of the creature in the grave, and his life of eucharistical acts, I regard as the form in which that one great act expresseth itself for our imitation thereof. But the act of becoming

visible, the act of taking a body, is the substance of the whole; and, therefore, this is deemed worthy of mention in the first place: "Then I said Lo, I come; in the volume of thy book it is written of me." Now, this self-dedication of the Son to the work of ruling and governing an outward creation, with all the lowly humiliation and painful suffering necessary thereto, wherefore was it done by him? Out of that grace which is in the one substance of the Godhead, and in all the personalities thereof. In the Father, it existeth as disposition of the will: in the Son, it existeth as an act expressive of that disposition, and I may say offered back to it; for to whom is this dedication offered by the Son, but to the Father? for who was there besides to whom to offer it? It is a very poor account of the work of Christ to say that he offered himself for any lower thing than to please the Father's grace; and the reason why, because it pleased the grace which was in him so to do. And what are all acts of the like devotedness, which by the creatures are offered unto the Father, but acts done in them by the Holy Ghost? And why doth he this? Because he hath the grace of the substance of the Godhead, which moveth to such acts. And to what end doth he move the creature to such acts of devotedness? In order to please the grace which the Father hath willed, and Christ hath expressed. So that from grace to grace the Spirit circulates, and the whole redeemed creatures will, through eternity, be

a manifestation of grace, and their acts all eucharistical or thankful acts. And such is our idea of eucharistical and thankful acts, and of the grace from which they proceed: and now let us go on to shew how this proceedeth in the church, and what evidences there are of its decline and almost total decay.

These are the objects to which this eucharistical or thankful spirit expresseth itself: the first, to God; the second, to the church; and the third, to the world. And towards each of these objects, it expresseth itself first in the disposition of the heart, which is grace, properly so called; and, secondly, in outward acts and offerings of every kind, which are eucharistical or thankful acts, properly so called. When I have opened these a little, you will be able to judge whether the times we live in be unthankful, uneucharistical, or not.

I. Towards God this spirit expresseth itself in an inward disposition of devotedness, which riseth above resignation to his will, and contentment with our estate, into the desire of foregoing our will, and forfeiting our estate. He that hath tasted that the Lord is gracious, is ready to offer, yea and doth offer the glory and the greatness, the wisdom and the wealth of his present estate, as Christ offered his eternal glory, in order to express the new disposition which he hath received from the Holy Ghost. And to whom doth he offer it, but unto the Fa-

ther, the fountain-head of that river of grace whereof a rivulet hath reached his barren and stony heart, and changed it into a fruitful field. There is in the soul of such a man whom the Holy Ghost hath quickened, a perpetual offering unto God the Father of the incense of devotedness of heart, and soul, and strength, and mind. It passeth up through Christ, in acknowledgment of the Spirit, which through Christ descendeth, but it reacheth unto the Father, and deposits there a fruit, a living fruit of that work which Christ wrought, another object of that purpose which the Father purposed in Christ. This state of the soul,—raised and wound up to the pitch of devotedness, and bound upon errands of grace,—hath its full and perfect exemplar in the Lord, but is often attained unto in those in whom the Holy Ghost worketh effectually, and is truly the only holy condition of the redeemed creature, and therefore that after which we should continually strive, believing that it is in the power of the Holy Ghost to accomplish it in the weakest and most wicked of the sinful creatures. And he who is possessed of it, is, without doubt, in the clear light of the Divine favour, and can no more doubt of it, than he can of the light which shineth at noon day. And it is revealed unto himself in acts of the soul inward, which no one can enter into: in enlarged contemplations of God, and enlightened views of his being, and of his work, ravishing possessions of the

Spirit, most intimate communion with Christ, and all the other secret and intimate conversations of the renewed soul with God, which cannot be expressed nor uttered, but which are wont to be known, and remembered, and desired, and delighted in by the saints of God. How doth the self-complacency of a vain man sit upon him, and entertain him, and beam forth from his countenance, even when he hath nothing to say or to do ! How doth the self-sufficiency of a proud man gird his spirit with might, and lift his face with scorn, and erect all his person, and dwell with him, and feed upon him, and he on it, even when he hath nothing in purpose or in hand ! And so of every other form of the evil spirit of man. Now, in like manner, a soul informed with the grace of God, doth yield such silent, solitary, and sequestered obligations unto the God and Father of all grace, being moved and enabled thereto by the Holy Ghost, and admitted to the sight and presence of the Father, through the mediation of the Son ; out of the fulness and the overflowings of which Spirit of grace, all directed to the Father, cometh that delight in the word of God which wearies not by day nor by night ; that unsatisfied perusal of the person of Christ as therein revealed, and diligent study of his work from the beginning to the ending of it : and likewise from this same full offering of the soul as an eucharist unto God, cometh the communion of saints, which are on the earth,

and the participation through faith of all their weakness, and of all their sufferings, and the bearing of their burdens, and the sharing of their joys: seeing we look upon them as the temple of the Holy Ghost, the members of Christ, and the chosen ones of God.

Now, brethren, if ye have understood this first fruit of a thankful heart, which is the offering of the heart itself, and will look upon the church as it is at present, I believe there never was an age in which her acts were so much outward and so little inward, when there was so little of that unseen and hidden, that closet worship and thanksgiving which God loveth; so much of that street and public offering which hath its reward from men, and in this present life. Concerning these acts of the church's thanksgiving, it is not now the time to inquire; but that they are all, or almost all, that she offereth, is to me manifest, first, From the great lameness, and poverty, and briefness of all visible acts of devotion, betokening that the fountains and springs in the heart are run dry; secondly, From the great ignorance and barrenness of discourse either from the pulpit or amongst brethren, which is chiefly for or against some public thing, not for or against any inward thing; thirdly, From the great preference of all public meetings, and public acts, over those of a private and personal kind: so that it is as true a bondage, a soul-scourging bondage, as the business of the world; and, fourthly, From the exclu-

sion of the form of acknowledging God, or seeking his blessing from those public assemblies which they hold in the highest repute. Truly if the free-will offerings of the heart, the voluntary gratuities of the soul unto God, be the eucharistical service which he loveth, the church hath indeed become eminently unthankful in these latter times, since this spirit of publicity and business, this revival of religion, as they call it, this great desire of converting a world which is to be destroyed, hath sprung up.

Now, the heart which is thus filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, and expresseth the same in spiritual offerings of the affections of the soul unto God, doth not rest there, but proceedeth by every outward act to declare its devotedness unto Him who hath redeemed it. For this is of the nature of thanksgiving, not a requital of the grace done, which is to treat it as debt, and not as grace, but a desire to express in all possible ways the sense we have of the grace far beyond and above all repayment. Therefore, when any one hath thus been visited with the electing grace of the Father, he hath an earnest desire to honour Him whom the Father desireth to be honoured, and to obey Him whom the Father desireth to be obeyed; that is Christ Jesus, whom the Father hath set forth as the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. Now, the first offering which we make to Christ, is the offering of our faith, to receive him and rest upon him alone for sal-

vation ; I consider faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ to be the highest act of thanksgiving unto the Father, who hath called us with his electing love. And what doth faith imply, but the receiving of the whole person and work of Christ, as God at sundry times, and in divers manners, hath testified the same ? for to manifest and testify Christ, is the spirit of all prophecy. God the Father hath presented us Christ to be believed on ; and our return for this infinite gift is to believe on him. Now faith is no selfish act of the mind, intent upon its own well-being, but a most self-denying act of the mind, preferring the cross of Christ to the pleasures of the world, and looking at the things which he is to bring with him, in preference to the things which are seen and temporal. It is a continual preference of things not seen to things seen, and a continual crucifixion of self to the honour of Christ ; in short, a preference of Christ unto ourselves, and of the things which stand upon his promise, to the things which stand in the favour of every sense. This, brethren, is the first offering of the soul, the first act of thanksgiving unto God the Father, even the acting of our faith upon Christ Jesus whom he hath sent. Now, to the right presentation of this offering, there is required, first, a thorough knowledge of the person of Christ, and of the work of Christ, and of the glorious kingdom which he is to establish, as these are set forth in his holy word : for, to believe that which we do not know, is

no belief at all; and to be indifferent to the knowledge of Christ, is surely to be indifferent to the faith of him. Whether then this generation of the church doth present the thanksgiving of their faith, the eucharistical offering of their faith upon him whom God hath sent, will be best ascertained by considering, first, the extent of their knowledge, and their desire to be informed concerning him. And I am sure every man capable of judging, will grant there never was a time when the knowledge of the person and work of Christ, or the capacity of discoursing thereof, was at so low an ebb in the church. Except the simple knowledge of him as Jesus, the Saviour,—and this not with any enlarged respect to the redemption of the fallen creatures, but simply for my own safety, for the atonement of my own sins,—excepting this selfish application of his offices, I may say that the mystery of his person is a sealed mystery, his Christhood, as the anointed one with the Holy Spirit, who also anointeth all the election, as the Lord who ruleth over all, and under whom kings and magistrates hold their offices, these things are not only neither known nor inquired into, but they are utterly rejected and derided; the Holy Ghost being looked upon as coming of will, and the powers that be as having their authority from the people, and for the people. So that the question with me is, not how much faith there is, but whether there be faith at all in the church.

Next to believing in Christ, is the offering of our obedience to him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world. Now, obedience implieth a positive injunction and commandment of Christ's setting forth, that we may obey him. What then hath Christ set forth, that we may obey him? To this question I well know what answer the most part of men in this generation will give; Personal holiness. They overlook the church, and at once apply the matter to self. I do not mean to undervalue the offering of personal holiness, while I insist that it shall not obscure things which come before it. And what are these? They are the institutions of Christ. And what are these institutions? First, the Church; and, secondly, the State. The Church, with its ordinances; and the State, with its laws and magistracy. He who hath not regarded these as institutions of Christ, nor offered to them of his reverence and obedience, because they are instituted by Christ, is indeed a very unthankful person.—To speak first of the Church. It consisteth of the means of grace, the vessels through which Christ conveyeth the Holy Spirit to the believer. For faith can realize nothing self-wise, but church-wise; not at first hand, but through the means of grace, of which Baptism is the ordinance wherein faith looks for the Holy Spirit; and the Lord's Supper is the ordinance wherein faith looks for the nourishment of Christ's body; the preaching of the word is the ordinance

wherein faith looks for the increase of knowledge ; prayer, through Christ, the ordinance to which faith looks for the supply of its wants ; fasting, the ordinance to which it looks for humiliation ; and so on through all the other ordinances of Christ's church. Now, next to being totally discountenanced and disbelieved, all these appointments and institutions of Christ are certainly in as low repute as they possibly can be. Our services are no thanksgivings, no offerings of our faith to God, no glad presentation of ourselves to receive his grace, no acknowledgment of grace already received, but a deference to custom, a regard for decency and decorum, an entertainment, a pastime, any thing but an eucharistical service. Here I perceive the unthankful character of the times. The same perceive I also in respect of the power of kings and magistrates, and the obedience of subjects ; which no one now rendereth as unto an ordinance of God, set to keep the power until he come to take it up. Who understandeth the foundations of the state ? Who blesseth God for them ? Who is jealous of them lest they should be subverted by the maxim, that all power is from the people and for the people ; lest they should be forfeited by holding intercommunion, and interchanging acts of confidence and good understanding with the apostate Papacy, which hath set a priest in the stead of Christ ? Who yieldeth obedience, who payeth tribute, who serveth the king in the various offices to which we are called, presenting

it as an offering of thanksgiving unto Christ, the great Head of power, and an act of obedience to him in the person of his viceroy. This department of thanksgiving is also well nigh lost.

In former times, ere the age of selfishness came in, men, being full of the eucharistical spirit, would devote of their substance to build a church, offering it in faith that the Lord would assemble a people, and set his name therein; or they would found a Lectureship in a church already built, in the faith of the ordinance of preaching; or taking pity upon the poor of Christ's church, they would build almshouses, or mortify sums of money, or otherwise present of their substance to the house of God, which is the church of Christ. I know that these things went often to excess, and were by Satan converted to superstitious uses: but the very abuse is a proof of the superabundance of the spirit out of which it arose. Almost all these things are done away with: the whole zeal hath gone into another channel; for the foundation of schools to teach mechanical knowledge, for the providing of apparatus to such institutions, and founding lectureships and libraries, and whatever can advance knowledge independent upon religion. And those endowments which the piety of our fathers appropriated to the church, are continually envied, and threatened with sacrilegious spoliation. It is so also in state matters: the voluntary services to defend the country in war are now no more in being; the

voluntary services of justices of the peace, to administer justice, is continually quarrelled with. The spirit of bargaining, of doing every thing upon the principle of justice, hath every where supplanted the spirit of gift, or doing it upon the principle of grace. There are plenty of contributions, but eucharistical offerings are exceedingly few. If against all these things they set in order before me the contributions to religious societies, and the exertions for spreading the Gospel in foreign parts, I lament to say how little of the true free-will offering of grace there is in them all ; how few of those who conduct these affairs, do it of grace ; how few of those who go forth to the heathen, do it of grace. And, alas ! how little of the collections which are made are made of grace, but rather obtained by dunning requisitions, and various arts of eloquence, into which it is not pleasant nor perhaps profitable to enter. Suffice it to say, that there is exceedingly little of grace, and very much of debt in their administrations.

If now we come to speak of the eucharistical or thankful spirit, as it shews itself to the world, or to the various memberships of society, keeping out of the question the relationships of parent and children, I would observe, first, how much the spirit of justice hath, in every man's affairs, in every man's mind, destroyed the spirit of grace ; how little we are afraid of falling short of the mark in our alms-givings, and charities, and bounties ; how continually afraid lest we

should not be able to pay every man his own. And yet I make no hesitation in asserting that God giveth us of his providence, in order to be liberal, and not merely to be just; not in order to be just and hoard the rest, but in order to be liberal, and then to lay bye the rest. "Give to him that asketh of thee, and of him that would borrow from thee turn thou not away." But now, after we have paid our debts, it is thought that the rest belongeth surely unto ourselves. This I deny: the rest was given, in order that we might shew forth with it the grace which God hath shewed forth towards us in Christ, "who, though he was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich." It is now as if men were all living under the Law, and not under the Gospel; as if they were called to shadow forth Moses, and not to shadow forth Christ. And I have no hesitation in saying, that this is the most express spirit of unthankfulness to God, the giver of all for those ends of liberality, which he hath embodied in the Gospel, that it is the most express spirit of selfishness; for law will oblige us to do what is just. There is little deference to God in that matter. But into this, which is a very wide subject of discourse, I enter not further at present, being rather desirous to point out our shortcomings in thankfulness one to another.

As the former characteristic of these perilous

times, which are to bring in the advent and judgment of the Lord, had reference to the ties and obligations of nature, this hath reference to the ties and obligations which we are brought under by the providence of God, and the ordinances of human life: such as to the servants which watched over our childhood; to the preceptors who instructed our boyhood and youth; to the masters who took us into the confidence of their affairs, and instructed us in the various crafts and occupations of life; to those who give us their custom and countenance in our several callings; to those who befriend us in our adversities, and comfort us in our afflictions, and stand by us in our desertions, and otherwise, in the providence of God, do minister to the wants and weaknesses of our solitary estate. These are the great occasions of gratitude, as the commonness of blood is the great occasion of affection; and now I leave you to judge whether, in all these the various spheres of gratitude, there be not a change for the worse within our own memory; whether the ancient feeling of foster-mother and foster-child, the ancient respect to the servants who first ministered to our helpless infancy, and shared, almost divided, our heart with our parents, be held up by acts of courtesy and bounty upon the one hand, by acts of honour and gratitude on the other; whether the reverence and awe of the preceptor and usher, who broke our wild spirits, and discip-

lined our unwilling minds, and dropt upon us, like the dews of heaven, never-ending instruction, informed our ignorance, and taught our ideas how to shoot, while with severe and stern discipline they taught us the more invaluable lesson of obedience and submission, and regular tasked diligence ; whether that ancient respect which drew Sandys and Cranmer to the humble curacy of Hooker, be any longer present in the minds of our youth, trained up in these brilliant days of the human mind ; whether the ancient gratitude felt by apprentices to their masters, the undying constancy of friend to friend, the fast attachment of servant and master, the grateful hereditary love of dependant to superior, yea to the very house and grounds which they occupied. I ask, whether these fine multitudinous threads which wove strong and durable the texture of the web of human life be not, many of them, wholly dissolved, and all of them grown so bare, as no longer to endure the convulsions of former times, hardly to sustain the tear and wear of life, and surely no longer able to keep warm and comfortable the hearts and souls of men. I know that these grateful affections which entwined into one strong band, all the particular threads of social life, the clanship, the chivalry, the lordship, the court, the university and the college, the school, the family, the circle of friends, the sphere of acquaintance, the attachment of neighbourhood, the pride of parish, of glen,

of dale, of district, and of county, are all looked upon by our modern philosophers and disciples of political justice, to be no better than the relics of barbarism, and vestiges of superstition. Base revilers of their fathers, and slanderers of their mothers, and disgrace to the name of Briton! Let them go to the back woods of Indiana, and keep their orgies of equality with the men of Kentucky, but not dare to defile the temple of British society with their unholy and irreverent feet.

Thus have I undertaken and performed the unpleasant, yet most needful, task of exposing another of the characteristics of the last times, and shewing that it is present in the midst of us. I lament, while I behold; and I am ashamed, while I reveal the misery of our estate; but if I might arouse men to serious thoughts of the condition into which the church is come, I would be comforted. I pray you, brethren, if ye believe these things, to be humbled before God, under the sense of them. And if you believe them not as yet, to give heed to them, and to consider. I pray you, brethren, if I have revealed to you any of your short-comings and omissions, in thankfulness either to God or to Christ, to the church, or to the state, or to the world, to be humbled because of them; and to repent and to seek the Spirit of all grace, that ye may be enabled to offer, in the time to come, a more perfect offering. For, be assured,

in shutting out God, you shut out your own enjoyment. The salvation proceedeth from grace to grace, not from work to work. And "to him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly." And "he who is unfaithful in the least, is unfaithful also in the greatest." And he that used not his one talent, was not entrusted with more, but given up to outer darkness. Therefore give heed to the words which have this night been spoken to you, and suffer them not to slip out of your remembrance. For a great duty hath been laid before you, and a great short-coming of this generation hath been laid open in your hearing. Therefore, follow not the multitude, but cleave unto the still small voice of Christ, and shine as lights in the world. Which may the Lord enable us all to do, and to his name be the praise. Amen.

SERMON VI.

UNHOLY.

2 TIM. iii. 1, 2.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be unholy.

THE former characteristic of the last times, in the midst of which we believe ourselves to be living, dearly beloved brethren, led us to discourse of the thankful, gracious, or eucharistical disposition of spirit which, flowing from the first fountain of God's love to the creatures for his own glory, and shewing itself in the work of Christ to come into the world in the creature form for the manifestation and impartation of the Godhead, doth shew itself forth in every one of his members, by leading them to deny and to devote themselves to the same great end of shewing forth the grace of the Godhead; so that in all their purposes and words and actions they shall not be content with attaining unto the just and equitable, but shall pass into the gracious or eucharistical, forgiving enemies

and dispensing blessedness, foregoing right and preferring loss, and in all things conforming to the pattern of Christ, for the same end of the Father's glory. In which, the only spirit proper to a Christian—for the just is only a legal, and doth not rise into the stature of an evangelical, principle—we shewed, by manifold demonstrations, that this age of the church is eminently defective above every other; having introduced into all acts and offices, from this the highest in the church, which I fill, down to the lowest, the idea of debt and payment of debt, and lost the ancient idea of a grace offered on the part of the superior, and a grace received on the part of the inferior. The same shewed we in the spirit of political affairs, where all things are deemed to be done by hire; and in the relation of masters and servants, where I may say there is nothing but paymaster and hireling; and in business, where it is all debtor and creditor; and in courtesy also, where the same degradation is introduced to the very payment of friendly visits: and in short every where, in all the offices of the church and state, and in all the functions of life, the spirit, not of a Christian land, but of a Jewish state, the legal principle of natural justice and equity hath prevailed over the Christian principle of free grace. I would fain re-enter into that subject, and go over the ground again, but for the resolution which I have taken to limit myself to one discourse upon each of these characteristics of the last perilous times;

and therefore, commending this Christian grace to you as the ruling principle of all your life, I do now proceed, in dependence upon the Holy Spirit, to discourse of the next feature of the times, which is “ unholiness :” towards the right and orderly exposition of which subject, I shall adopt the following method :—

First, To treat of the principle of holiness, what and where it is.

Secondly, To shew the outward ordinances, forms, and demonstrations of the same ; and,

Thirdly, To shew how these are contravened and contradicted in these times above any other time in the history of the church.

Of the mystery of man’s primeval constitution, we are not called upon to discourse : only this much it is necessary to say, that he did not possess the indwelling of the Holy Spirit ; for in that case the Holy Spirit would have kept possession in defiance of all Satan’s wiles and malignity : and if he had possessed before his fall the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, there would have been no room for a redemption and regeneration ; for the redemption and regeneration would then have been a part of the first creation, and included therein ; and there would have been no progression in the Divine purpose from stage to stage, but, contrariwise, a putting forth of the whole at once, and a defeat of it at once, and afterwards a putting forth of the original power and strength again ; a doing and an undoing, and a doing over again of that which had been done and undone.

It is the peculiarity of the third great stage in the Divine purpose towards the creature, that he should be informed with the Holy Spirit, and thereby triumph over the powers of sin and infirmity which are in the possession of him through the Fall, which is his second state. And, therefore, the first or primitive state of the creature is a state of innocency and of goodness; and, if we also say, of holiness, we understand thereby not that holiness which we possess by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. I would rather apply the term "righteousness" than the term "holiness" to our first parents, so long as they continued in their faithfulness; because I find holiness applied to the creature when sanctified by the Holy Ghost, which, as we have said, the creature possesseth not in his first estate. If this distinction be kept in view, I know no better definition of the condition of our first parents than that which is given in the Shorter Catechism—"In his own image, after his own likeness, in righteousness and true holiness."

Thus far, therefore, as to the origin and cause of holiness, there hath never been any dispute among the orthodox churches; all being agreed that it is an attribute of the creature, not in its fallen, but in its regenerated estate. Whatever difference of opinion may exist with respect to the nature of the holiness possessed by the creature before the Fall, as it first came out of the hands of its Maker, none hath ever

existed with respect to the creature thereafter, as a state of sinfulness most abhorrent to the holiness of God : most defiled in his sight ; and utterly incapable of any good or pleasant work, until it shall have been renewed by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost ; through whose working, and of whose irresistible might proceedeth all good works, in direct opposition to, and defiance of, the power of sin, acting in the creature, or acting upon him from without.

Now, into this state of holiness the church is, by the sacrament of Baptism, introduced : which, while it is, upon the one hand, a solemn declaration of our utter and entire sinfulness in the sight of God by nature, is, upon the other hand, a solemn act of washing away the same in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. As it is written, Eph. v. 25, " As Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it ; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish." And, in like manner, in all these passages which we examined lately, when discoursing of Baptism, especially in the sixth chapter of the Romans, we find the baptized spoken to as dead to sin, and having no longer power to live therein. And indeed the church hath no meaning, unless it signify the redeemed from amongst the creatures, the regenerate from amongst the crea-

tures; the opposite to the world. There is no room for an intermediate state of the creature between the fallen and the regenerated. And as their needeth no ordinance nor institution to represent the former, which is represented in the whole visible estate of creation, I know not what the church can represent, if it be not the latter; that is, the election from amongst the creatures, brought into a redeemed and regenerated estate. How otherwise would it be called by such names, "the elect of God, the body of Christ, the temple of the Holy Ghost?" The church, thus representing the election of God, dwelt in by the Holy Spirit, ought to be holy, is intended by God to be only holy, and in all things to shew forth the work of the redemption of his Son, as it is applied to fallen creatures by the Holy Ghost. And thus have we arrived at the outward manifestation of a holy people; which is a people gathered out of the world into a church. And from this we must look also for our idea of unholiness. For if holiness is not proper to the creature in its first estate, neither is unholiness proper to be said of the fallen creature, merely as fallen, before it yet knoweth of sanctification; darkness, deadness, unfruitfulness, worldliness, and devilishness, being the proper characteristics of it in this respect. But if holiness be properly spoken of that portion of the creatures which hath been separated from this dark and dead condition, then unholiness is properly spoken of such of them as transgress

the covenant, contradict the condition, falsify the witness, and otherwise disappoint and defeat the end of the church ; or, being applied to the creatures which have not been brought into the estate of a church, unholiness is always by opposition to, and contradistinction from, those which have been so sanctified and set apart. Not in opposition to, and contradistinction with, their unfallen condition, but with the regenerate condition. To take some examples : when God had selected such and such animals to call them clean, then those which were left became unclean ; when he had selected a people to himself, and sanctified them with the rite of circumcision, that family and nation became holy, and those that were left uncircumcised, became unholy ; though no change had thereby passed upon them at all. So also holy things, and holy places, and holy times and seasons, are those which God is pleased to choose ; and in choosing to sanctify which he doth declare the whole to be unholy. It is this act of election of a part to be sanctified, which stampeth the lump unholy, and leaveth the rest in their unholy condition. Now all these outward acts for sanctifying a portion of every creature existent, whether persons, things, times, or places, were done in order to signify, first, of all, That there must be an election of the Father : this ariseth out of the very act of the separation :—secondly, That there must be a redemption of the Son, by taking upon himself the form of the fallen

creature: this cometh out of the nature of the act or separation, of which every one will be found to be prophetic or commemorative of Christ's coming in the flesh, to be cut off in the flesh:—thirdly, That there must be an abiding and indwelling of the Holy Ghost: this again cometh out of the end of the separation, for God's witness and worship; and, therefore, the Spirit is properly named Holy, as being the origin and sustenance of holiness: and, let me add, that Christ is also named Holy, upon the very account, that by the Holy Spirit dwelling in him in all richness and fulness, he was preserved without sin, though he was in the form of the sinful creature. It is not the act of consecration which constituteth the holiness, but the communication of the Holy Spirit therein promised. Only no one may, no one can, separate the act from the agent, without a dishonour of Christ's institution, and limitation of the Holy Ghost, yea a misrepresentation of him as not then coming, or preparing to come, when above all other times he hath promised to come. For it is too rude a way of preventing the ordinance from being abused, to destroy its efficacy altogether; that is, to cut the knot, instead of unloosing it. The ordinances are the outward marks of sanctification; and all without them are to be counted unholy, all within them holy. If any one say that all within them are not to be counted holy, then, a part within being unholy, they serve as no distinction at all between the holy and the

unholy. When, therefore, we apply the term unholy to those within the covenant, we imply that they are so by being hypocrites, reprobates, and covenant-breakers: which is a degree of unholiness far higher than that of those who were never included. They should have had holiness, but they have it not. They have counted the blood of the covenant, with which they should have been sanctified, an unholy thing; and they have done despite unto the Spirit of grace. It is an act of desecration, of profanation, of apostasy, of which they are guilty. Nevertheless such as are thus guilty of unholiness, and of falling away, have never been possessed of the Holy Ghost, who, as hath been said, would make good his own place, and not be dispossessed again. They have had all the demonstrations which God hath seen it good to make of his grace, and which it is possible for a fallen creature to receive, or for a responsible creature to receive without destroying his responsibility: against which, having obstinately persevered in unbelief and impenitency, they do reveal the more hideous character of sin, and serve that great end of the Creator's purpose; but most surely they never have been anointed with the Holy Ghost, to bring forth holiness, and fulfil that higher end of the Divine purpose; and, of this sort, it hath been the counsel of God to permit Satan to bring a portion into his church at all times, who are the tares which Satan sows in the field while the

ministers of Christ are asleep; the wolves in sheep's clothing within the fold; the unfruitful branches which are planted along with the fruitful ones in the vine. Yet are these brought under the vows of God equally with the rest, and as such responsible for the performance of them, and admitted to the grace in the strength of which they are to be performed. Yea all who are standing in the church are to regard themselves as standing between these two conditions of election and of reprobation, entreated with all the fulness of grace proper to the former, liable to all the fulness of temptation proper to the latter. So that, knowing all these ordinances of God, that the church should hold in it persons of both sorts, yea and is to be consumed at length for being full only of reprobates, we are not the less to regard it unto the end, and until it be removed, as God's standing ordinance of holiness, which Satan hath succeeded, by the wickedness of men, so wonderfully to pervert.

Be it so then, that the church representeth the holy state, as the world doth the unholy state, of the creation: now, in order that the church may become a proper representation of the election of God, and body of Christ, and temple of the Holy Ghost, it is necessary that she should have certain visible ordinances which shadow forth the great truth, that all holiness is derived from the inhabitation of the Holy Spirit. And these ordinances must be from God, of his own contrivance for that blessed end. Let us now examine, as we pro-

posed in the second place, what these are, from which we shall easily perceive the present unholiness of the church.

The first, without all doubt, is Baptism, which standeth upon the border-line, and is the boundary of separation between the creature regenerate, and the creature unregenerate. Remember, brethren, I speak of Baptism as the Lord and the Apostles speak of it,—not the sign merely, but the sign containing the grace signified,—when I say that it standeth the boundary around the church, between the creature regenerate and the creature unregenerate. Let baptism, in the true sense of that word, be done upon any man, and he is a creature regenerate: and he who will suffer himself to use the word in a lower sense, doth so far forth desecrate the word, and open the way to the spoliation of God's holy ordinances. The baptised, therefore, ought to be holy, seeing baptism is for the remission of sins, and the receiving of the Holy Ghost. And because that remission of sins and gift of the Holy Ghost is not otherwise to be obtained but by faith upon Jesus Christ, those who receive this seal of the righteousness which is by faith, whether for themselves or for others, should be well looked to by the church, both as respecteth their honesty, their knowledge, and their blameless walk and conversation. And when they have been admitted amongst the regenerate church, they should keep all the ordinances and commandments of the church blameless.

All this cometh from the very nature and purpose of that holy Sacrament. Now, dear brethren, be judges between me and the church, whether the sacredness of this holy ordinance be not altogether destroyed, whether the very meaning of it be not lost. Look back into the earlier years of your lives, look back into the standards of our church, and say, whether this first ordinance of holiness hath not suffered grievously from the men of these times. The language in which it is spoken of in our Catechism can no longer be endured; the solemnity with which it was wont to be administered we can no longer bear. Out of the church, in private houses; when in the church, at a time which may not interrupt the service; is this holy sacrament huddled over. Any man presenting himself, without inquiry, for the simple paying of the fees, may have his child baptized. It is even worse amongst the Dissenters than in the churches; for some are found to stand up amongst us for the ancient purity and signification of the ordinance, and vows are imposed upon the engaging parent or sponsor; but there, as I am told, the very form of sponsorship is dispensed with. And I know that amongst no class of the church doth so much darkness and indifference exist upon the subject of baptism, as amongst the Evangelical, amongst whom I have hardly found one who hath even an idea of what is meant by this most excellent service of the Church. So that I may say, whatever

the revival may have operated, it hath operated as yet no revival of the holiness of this first sacrament of the Christian church; which no longer signifieth to almost any one the transition of the creature from its unregenerate to its regenerate state. But, upon the principle of this, I would not insist further at present, having sufficiently enlarged upon it in former discourses. And yet I must, for the truth's sake, point out to you the myriads of baptized persons who are openly wicked and profane as the heathen, if not worse; for the very name of Christian is by them blasphemed amongst the heathen. And I would reprove the indifference which the church sheweth to these. They may steal, they may commit adultery, they may murder, and the law will prosecute them, but the church heedeth them not. The state is holier than the church: the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. A baptized man is as an unbaptized man. There is really no difference made in these days between the one and the other. They say things were always as bad in the church. I deny it. The increase of crime is prodigious; the increase of profanity and blasphemy is prodigious; the increase of indifference to religion is prodigious; the increase of scandal and malice is prodigious; and, in general, I would say, the baptized are in these times much more absolved from all sense of obligation to God and the church, than they ever have been. Which

is a proof of the unholiness of the church, and ought to be a continual grief and affliction to those who love the Lord : but, behold, it is a day of rejoicing, and of boasting amongst the religious ; who, with the most cold-hearted indifference, have cut off all the rest, and enclosed a few within the fold of the religious world. As if a mother having certain evil children in the family, should, instead of mourning over them, and doing her part to reclaim them, say, ‘ Oh let these go to ruin : they are none of my children. I bore them, to be sure, but still they are none of mine : but these two or three are mine : look what goodly children they be ; but for the rest I give myself no trouble about them.’ Such a mother, at present, is the unholy church, which clubbeth certain into a religious world, and treateth the rest as if they were under the sentence of excommunication, or had never been brought into the church. Oh, brethren, you know what the Scottish church was, and what it is ; be bowed down because of our unholiness : you know what the state of that portion of it is over which we watch, the dispersion of our brethren in this city ; be bowed down because of our unholiness. Whoever may deny, we at least will confess to the charge, that the times are come in which we are exceedingly unholy : we will bow ourselves down and mourn, as one that mourneth for his mother ; we will weep as

Rachel who wept for her children, and would not be comforted because they were not.

The next point upon which I have to make an observation, to shew you the present unholliness of the church, is the state of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; which, according to the right idea of our church, and of every orthodox church, ought to be partaken by all the baptized, for the nourishment of that new life which they are declared to have, and by the church are considered to have. And now behold by how many are the communion tables of the church deserted! How few of the baptized honour the body and blood of Christ, without which there is no spiritual strength! How many pass it by upon the other side, as not caring to partake of it, but vainly thinking to carry on their warfare without these celestial helps! Of our own church, which it chiefly concerneth us to watch over, how many thousands of the baptized go without the comfort and edification of the table which the Lord hath covered with the symbols of his own holy humanity, let the Pastoral Letter which the Presbytery hath issued bear witness. And, though God hath shewed unto this congregation his grace, in a remarkable manner, by stirring up amongst us a right sense of our privilege and obligation to sit down at his table, all the duty which we feel, and all the blessing which we desire and believe to be in it, doth only con-

strain us the more to pity and commiserate the most wretched condition of the tens of thousands who forsake their own mercy, prefer their own poverty, and perpetuate their own weakness; and, I may say, seal their own condemnation. But, in these characteristics which we are exhibiting of the present church, we must take a wider survey than among the members of our church here residing: therefore let us transport ourselves to our native land, and reflect upon the multitudes there who neglect altogether, and the unholy mixture who do come forward to partake of this divine ordinance. The tokens, which heretofore were not given without careful and scrupulous examination, both of knowledge and of life, how often, as I am told, are they given without either; and how seldom is there any exercise of holy discipline towards those who are of the Lord's house, and sit down together at his table! The drunkard, the swearer, the profaner of God's Sabbath, the neglecter of his ordinances being permitted to sit down with the flock of Christ, in a most unnatural intermixture, defeating the great end of the church, which is to present in herself the visible symbol of the church invisible, which is the temple of the Holy Ghost. I have already said, that it is permitted of God, in punishment of our negligence, that tares should be sown amongst the wheat; and that the idea of a pure communion upon earth, though ever to be followed after,

is never to be realised. Yet is it our part continually to strive after this, and our fathers did seek hard to attain unto it: but behold now how it hath been relaxed, and almost given up. Have ye forgot the noble faithfulness of Calvin, who refused the sacrament to one of the Syndics of Geneva, and who, after they had sought to overawe and compel him against his conscience, did say, stretching out his right hand, that rather than with this hand give the bread and wine to one whom he believed to be living in impenitence and wickedness, he would thrust it into the burning flame to consume there from his bones: and when, after a long struggle, he succeeded in maintaining the post of holy discipline, he did next morning go to the chief magistrate and tender his resignation as pastor of Geneva, being rather willing to go forth with his staff and scrip to beg his bread, than to be a minister under men who would persecute and trouble him in the execution of his pastoral office. And accordingly, with his staff in the one hand, and his bundle in the other, he went forth of their city, obeying the word of the Lord, "When they persecute you in one city, flee unto another." Alas! alas! how is that Genevan church fallen, which hath proscribed all preaching upon the most essential and capital points of the Christian faith; such as the Divinity of Christ, the work of the Spirit, and justification by faith! And, I may say, how far fallen along with it are all the churches

which follow the same model and platform of polity! For, though we have reason to bless God, that our forms of doctrine are Calvinistic still, our forms of polity purely Presbyterian and primitive still, how far we are relaxed in the preaching of the one, and the practice of the other, it needeth not that I should further discourse. And if from home we look to the churches which have followed the corrupt way of diocesan Episcopacy, the Lutherans abroad, into whose churches the worst abuses of the apostasy are fast creeping, and the Established Church in these lands, where the very form of discipline is abolished, and excellent men shrink even from the idea of reviving it; how the sacraments are, without knowledge of the parties, or any certificate whatever of their fair and inoffensive character, administered to all comers, and not withheld from the most profane atheist or deist, or the most openly profane violator of the laws: given, oh most horrible to be told! to the very murderer, when with all hardihood and impenitency he is about to mount the scaffold, to atone for his guilt to his country's offended laws. Much of the odium of this profanation of the sacraments is attributed to the state, which is perfectly innocent, and most praise-worthy, because it hath said no one shall fill any office in the government, or in the fleets and armies of the king who hath not taken the sacrament. If the state indeed interfered with the church, and said, You must administer the

sacrament, in order to qualify this man for office, it were a thing so enormous as that any churchman should die rather than obey. But when the state saith simply, as any honest and pious head of a house in this congregation might very properly say, and as indeed pious masters in our native land were wont to say, I will have no one to serve me whom the church hath not reported to me as free of all ecclesiastical scandal, sound in the faith, and sufficient in the knowledge of Christ, I say it is a most holy thing on the part of the state : and a most unholy thing it is in the administrators of the church not to be faithful in the duties committed to them, but to hand up to the state every description of persons who may be pleased to apply to them for a qualification. If they would imitate the faith and the courage of Calvin, that name now much despised, but once most honoured by the Church of England, to whom we have alluded above, and stand the issue of any prosecution, and the penalty of any sentence, it would soon be seen what a stronghold and bulwark of the land was here : which, by the unholiness of the church hath been converted into one of the greatest abominations of the land ; according to the true maxim, that the corruption of the best thing is always the worst.

But it may be said, and is wont to be triumphantly said, Things are very different amongst the various classes of Dissenters from the church : I allow they are very different ; but it is pos-

sible for two things widely different to occupy the two extremes, and to be equally distant from the point of righteousness. It is possible for discipline, which should flow out of love, and be made perfect in love, to flow out of Phari-
saical pride, and to be made perfect in Phari-
saical cruelty; which is still worse than the condition of the publicans and sinners. It is possible to convert the examination for the Lord's Supper into a scrutiny, and admission to the membership of a church into a qualification for heaven. And whenever the grace which in the Lord's Supper is held forth, and for which the Lord's Supper is to be desired, hath ceased to be the subject for which that ordinance is recommended: as amongst the Dissenters is lamentably the case, who generally deny that it is any thing more than a commemorative rite, then rest assured, that instead of invitation, ye will have keeping back, and instead of loving reception, ye will have cold suspicion, and instead of help in all trials, and comfort in all weaknesses, you will have jealousy of the credit of the community, and fear of its good name, together with other things of the like worldly nature, which bespeak the feeling commonly known by the name 'l'esprit de corps,' or the spirit of the fraternity, rather than the catholic love of the body of Christ. But into these things I enter not further, than to say, that my belief is, the spirit of Phari-
saical self-sufficiency hath as much alienated the communion of the Dissenters

from the simplicity of Christ, as the want of holy discipline hath alienated that of the Established Churches; and it is a judgment forced upon me, against my early predilections and opinions, that the former alienation is greater than the latter.

And now, dear brethren, if the state of the two sacraments do reveal such an actual and growing unholiness in the church of Christ, how much more so would it be found to be, if we were to come to speak of the other ordinances of the church! For example, the ordination of ministers of the Gospel, or bishops, hath come by degrees to be almost a bare form, to be qualified for by so much school learning and outward observance of rules; like a calling pursued for a bit of bread, and in almost every other way profaned! And as to the ordination of elders, or priests, how do men seek the office for mere respectability of character, and advancement in the secularities of life! how is it thought to be discharged, without once thinking of or attending to the souls of the people; used for every thing but what Paul hath declared it to be, for feeding the flock of Christ, which God hath purchased with his own blood! How hath the ordination of deacons ceased altogether in our church! because the elder hath slidden from his place, into the deacon's lower place. If, again, I were to speak of the unholiness of our ecclesiastical assemblies, where the spirit of deep and solemn gravity seemeth almost or

altogether departed ; of the almost entire cessation of these in the sister church, and of a thousand other things which were instituted by Christ, and established by our fathers for the very end of preserving the holiness of the church ; I would make no end of the very painful subject, it is so large, and the proofs of it accumulate so much on every side.

But above all other proofs is the fact, that the very idea wherein the holiness of these ordinances consisteth is well nigh, if not altogether, lost ; that is, that all these sacraments and ordinances are intended to convey a spiritual gift : namely, Baptism ; the Holy Ghost, for regeneration ;—the Supper ; the Lord's body and blood, for the continuance of life ;—ordination of ministers ; a gift of preaching and government ;—of elders ; a gift of exhortation and government ;—of deacons ; a gift of wise administration and government ;—and so forth, through all the gifts and offices of the Holy Spirit for the work of the ministry and the edification of the body of Christ. When this idea of a grace given is forgotten, and flatly denied, how can it be expected that the ordinance should be any longer holy ? It may be superstition, or it may be convenience, or it may be pride, or it may be custom, that keeps it up ; but holiness it hath none, after it is deprived of the Holy Spirit. What I am about to say will seem to many very strange, but yet I will say it, that the people which go to deny the presence of

the Holy Ghost in the ordinances of Christ's appointment, go far, if not all the length, to commit the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which cannot be forgiven.

But, before I conclude, I would present to you, as it were, a bird's-eye view of the subject under consideration, which is worthy of all careful study; forasmuch as it concerneth God, and hath reference to that claim which he interposeth in right of Creator, but especially in right of Redeemer, to the services of men. And, in order that ye may judge of the unholiness of these, compared with former times, I pray your observation of these three heads, of holy persons—the holy Scriptures—and holy things.

Holy persons consist of all who are set apart by any ordinance of the church: in the first degree, the priesthood; in the second, the communicants who partake of the Lord's body; and, in the third, the baptized. Now, I ask you, without attending to the reason of it, to answer me as to the fact, whether the unholiness of the times be not shewn in a growing disrespect for the priesthood. Caused, no doubt, oftentimes by our own unworthiness of holy orders, but still more by the spirit of desecration and unholiness which is gone abroad, the very name of priest hath become a scoff, and the name of churchman a derision. Our order is no more sacred; our office is without authority; our persons without respect. In public newspapers our infirmities are blazoned abroad; in public streets we need

only to be known, in order to be the song of the vulgar. If, again, I speak of those who sit down at the Lord's table, who are the "holy persons," as the baptized are the "holy infants" of the church: not only the sacredness, but the very esteem of that distinction seemeth to be departed, in the relaxation and almost extinction of ecclesiastical discipline. Though the church hath done her utmost, by most venerable, august, and solemn services, to draw the sacred fence around the communion, how every aspirant or expectant of office will trample them all down under his profane foot! Thus the distinction of holy persons is desecrated by the unholy people. No gild, nor city company, nor masonic society, but would be more revered in the entering to it, than is the royal priesthood, and chosen nation, and peculiar people of God. And it is as much despised by the multitudes, who never deem it worth their while to take on the voluntary profession of Christ, as it is profaned by those who do. And for the baptized, it hath required me the labour of many homilies, and will require the labour of more still, to make you understand that they are in any thing more holy than the pagans. So much for holy persons. To which I could add, the profanation of the elder's office in our church; the profanation of the priest's office for a piece of bread in every church; its base subserviency to patrons on the one hand, and submission to the people upon the other.

But I proceed to open perhaps the greatest sign of the unholiness of these times, in their treatment of the holy Scriptures, which even the Papacy held sacred during the dark ages, until the Council of Trent; when, to sustain a tottering superstition, they dared to decree that the Apocryphal books were canonical Scriptures. But we, to sustain no church, to serve no interest of any church, but straight in the teeth of the canons, and subversive of the foundations of the Protestant church, have adopted the profanity of the Trent Council; and, out of pure irreverence—they say, liberality and generosity; and so it is, but an unholy liberality and generosity—out of voluntary irreverence for the sacred Scriptures, and pure blindness of spirit that there is any evil in the thing, we have set afloat and circulated the Scriptures all intermingled and adulterated with these unsanctioned and unsanctified writings. Ah me! what would the ancient Jews have said to this?—the ancient Jews, who would not suffer a king to enter the sanctuary, and who oftentimes died at the sacrifices, rather than suffer the time of them to be desecrated in the straitness of their sieges? The only man in London who was found zealous enough to thrust his hand through the window and pluck down the blasphemous picture of the invisible God, and surrender himself to pay the penalty, was a Jew: and the only nation worthy to keep the oracles of God pure, will be found yet to be Jews. They, and they only, have the right

idea of the sacredness and value of Divine revelation.

And for sacred things—in which I include the Sabbath, and the house of God, when it is occupied for Divine worship, and the sacraments, and the ordinances of Divine worship—to speak of them a little in order. First, of the Sabbath: I cannot tell how it was in this city thirty years ago; some say better, some say worse; but I well know what it was in other parts, and can bear my witness that in no way more than in growing disrespect for this holy day, is the increasing unholiness of the age shewn forth: and how much Satan hath poisoned men's minds with respect to the principle of the Sabbath altogether, and shaken their faith in it as a standing ordinance of the church, I can likewise testify, having had more arguments to maintain with young men of my own standing, upon that, than upon any other subject: and I believe it is an evil custom, a desecration of that holy day, which was not known thirty years ago, that lawyers should keep their offices open, and merchants their counting-houses, and money-changers their banks. As to the house of God, during the hours of public worship; it is such a weariness and vexation to my spirit to see how it is profaned by loungers and idlers coming in and going out, as if it were a place of public entertainment, that I can hardly bear to speak of it, but will content myself by telling you how it was wont to be in

the days of old. John Knox, our Reformer, using the liberty of his office in preaching, chanced to give offence by his boldness to the Lord Provost of St. Andrews, who, being offended, dared to interrupt the holy service by leaving the church abruptly, in the midst of the sermon. The Reformer said nothing at the time : but next Sabbath, when he saw him in his place, he publicly rebuked him before the congregation. But such now is the unholiness of men's minds, that if I were to do such a thing in my place, to any one of the many who thus daily offend, I should be thought either a conceited fool or an arrogant upstart, so to intermeddle with the liberty of the subject. Without going into details, let those instances suffice to shew you the state of unholiness to which the minds of men are come. The same thing might be demonstrated by comparing the holy men of these times with the holy men of ages past ; the sacred literature of these times, with that of times past ; or by any other test of comparison whatever ; but, preferring the method of direct declaration to that of comparison, I have shewn you, by these three sketches of holy men, holy writings, and holy things, how unholy the spirit of these times is become.

And thus, dear brethren, have I again sought to reveal another of the characteristics of the church in these times in which we live,—its profanity, or unholiness. And I confess to you,

that, for myself, I must plead guilty to my own indictment, and confess that I am a most unholy man, not worthy to stand in the room of my fathers; that I have not attained to the stature of my fathers in the faith of the holy doctrine, nor in the spirit of a holy life; in the gift of faithful preaching, nor in the duty of pastoral watchfulness. I trust every elder and deacon of this church, looking at the rule written in the holy Scriptures, and enlarged in our standards, is most willing to make the same tender of his confessions before the righteous throne of God, that as office-bearers in the church we are an unholy and an unworthy eldership. And I trust that the communicants of this church have seen their short-comings, and the baptized their negligence, and all men their sinfulness, and the sinfulness of the days in which we live. The Spirit is exceedingly weak in us, and we are ready to die. God send us help out of his sanctuary of health and strength! I trust, moreover, dear brethren, that the painful task which I have performed hath enabled you to take a wider observation than the compass of our own community, and that your hearts have been exercised with the larger pity and compassion of the Gentile church in general, and of the church of these lands in particular. If it hath pleased God to bring into your souls any visitations of tender feeling, humbleness of mind, and intercessions of the Spirit, a good work is accomplished.

For it were nothing to see the state of the evil, unless we be grieved for the same. If these things be true, know that the last days and the perilous times are at hand, and that nothing can deliver us from their overwhelming temptations, but the firm belief of the Lord's advent to deliver and redeem us. For which I trust you are instant in prayer; and the more full of expectation and of inquiry, as you perceive by all these things that the time is at hand. I pray God to give us all grace to look upon these, the evil conditions of his church, with much and sore affliction; that we may be stirred up to witness and testify, and to intercede for our brethren, and for our children, and for the house of our fathers, and for the beloved church of Christ!

SERMON VII.

WITHOUT NATURAL AFFECTION.

2 TIM. iii. 1, 3.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come: for men shall be.....without natural affection.

IN following out these characteristics of the last times—or, as they may be called, forms and effects of the infidel spirit, which is at length to possess the church, after the spirit of superstition, which hath so long had the mastery, is thrown out—we now come to a class of offences which indicate a total corruption of the natural bonds and uniting principles of man to man; whereof the first, being the subject of our present discourse, is entitled, “Without natural affection.” To discourse aright concerning this feature of the last times, it will be necessary, First, that we define, what is meant by the word which is translated “natural affection;” Secondly, shew the place which it occupies in the creation of God; Thirdly, shew by what means it may be strengthened, and by what means impaired and destroyed; and, Lastly, that it hath sorely

declined in this age, from the time that the spirit of infidelity began to unfold itself.

1. We have therefore, according to this plan, First, to define the meaning of the word itself, and to shew to what part of our natural constitution it hath respect. The word in the original signifies, that instinctive love with which every creature is endued by God towards those of its own kind, and especially toward its young ; and being applied to men, it doth represent that strongest of natural ties, which bindeth parents to children and children to parents ; which uniteth families in one, and formeth the little communities of kindred and relationships of blood ; and likewise, passing beyond this, its most strong and peculiar sphere of operation, it doth constitute that fund of kindness with which we regard our fellow-men, and are disposed to enter into society with them, to form contracts, and carry on the commerce of human life. Such is the word rendered “ natural affection ;” and such is the thing of which our text declareth that the latter days shall be eminently deficient.

From this definition of the word, it manifestly hath reference to those affections which the hand of God hath implanted in the heart, in order to protect and provide for the helplessness of children, and the infirmities of age, and the diseases incident to our nature, the wants of solitude, the miseries of desertion, and whatever other calamities, from within and from without, would necessarily befall a soli-

tary human creature, between the cradle and the grave. Were it not for this instinct of natural love and kindness, which attracteth man to man with certain degrees of strength according to the proximity of relationship, and which, according to its degrees of strength, doth constitute those closer and still closer relationships, we should be, as it were, so many separate beings; formed solitary, and having no predilection for society, except as interest or pleasure might draw us to one another. I place this rudimental and instinctive affection of man to man, anterior to, and independent of, all selfish interests, or personal advantages. It is even before the growth of knowledge and understanding; being strongest in the bosom of parents to their infant children, and of children towards one another. By and bye, indeed, according as the faculties of the mind shew themselves, and the various tastes and sentiments of the soul begin to seek for their favourite objects, there grows out of the root of natural affection a stately and magnificent tree, bearing all manner of social virtues, and religious duties, sentimental attachments, and peculiar loves; which yet do always acknowledge that root of natural affection and common kindness from which they spring: and if at any time they forget it, they grow into vices of selfishness, headlong passions, envies, jealousies, strifes, and wars; which grievances of man's soul and afflictions of human life, are but the corruption

of that natural affection which God implanted in our hearts to be the parent of all love, concord, and union, to resist at all hands the selfish passions and destructive propensities of our nature. Yea, I may go further, and say, that, as the meekest and most timid of all creatures are at once converted into the boldest and the fiercest in order to preserve their offspring, the objects of their natural affection; and as the most quiet and peaceful shepherds and herdsmen are at once changed into the most fierce and obstinate warriors, when their peaceful and harmless occupations are invaded by ruthless destroyers; so may I say in general, that the irascible and warlike propensities of man are given by God on very purpose, and by him kept in reserve for the very end, of defending that lovely nest of homely, domestic, and kindly affections which is built and compacted by those natural instincts whereof we now discourse.

2. This bringeth us to consider, in the Second place, the office which is served by these natural affections in the scheme of God's creation and providence, and how they respect the redemption by Jesus Christ. In creation, they are intended to serve as a counterpoise to our own personality, or will, which, since the Fall, hath broken loose from the obedience of God. The great and miserable evil, of a will diverse from the will of God, would have thrown us quite out of all rule, and obedience, into the condition

of the pure spiritual intelligences who by their fall passed into the state of devils at once ; and we should have been left without a remedy, had it not been for this bodily constitution of man and of the world, which retaineth us within certain bonds of nature, no doubt, oppressive to the will, but a necessary oppression, until it shall itself be redeemed from that rebellion against God, which it cannot now, of itself, help itself from continually raising. Natural affection, I say, doth bind the wandering and wicked will under certain laws and conditions, which keep the world in being, and preserve it in expectation of that great redemption, which, beginning in the central will, shall be extended to the utmost bounds of man's habitation : and in the mean time, while the Redeemer tarries, it doth, under the guidance of God's providence and the admonitions of his prophetic word, constitute a fellowship and communion of man with man, of friend with friend, of husband with wife, of parent with child, of brother with brother ; whereby is kept up and fostered in man a dim presentiment of that communion of the saints which the Redeemer came to constitute, and of that blessed kingdom of the saints which he cometh to govern. By natural affection men were made capable of knowledge, of desire, of hope, concerning that salvation which was yet to be. So that I may say, this natural affection, reigning through the whole sphere of life, is, as it were, the soil prepared for that

charity which rangeth through the whole sphere of renewed life; and, further onwards, for that power and government which shall yet be exercised by the saints over the universe of God. And, as it is always commanded in the Holy Scriptures, that, before a man shall be taken to fill any office in the church of Christ, he must rule well his own house; and as no one shall be advanced to the kingdom who hath not been faithful in the church: so I reckon, that the sphere of natural affection, when fulfilled, doth lead on and pass into the sphere of Christian love; as this again leadeth on and passeth into the sphere of eternal kingdom, power, and glory.

Which will more clearly appear, if we consider the nature of the first commandment in the second table of that Law which was given to shew out the completeness and righteousness in the abstract of that estate of the creature into which the Fall had brought mankind, in order that each and all mankind by contrast therewith might know their state of wickedness and bondage unto sin, and desire a Redeemer to save them from the curse, and empower them for the obedience of that holy Law. This Law, in its second table (for the first table concerneth not our present subject), addresseth itself in every one of its commandments to the work of defining and defending the various relations of social life. But observe how it preferreth before all to take in hand the regulation of the family,

where natural affection hath its first origin, and requireth from children to acknowledge with honour those of whom they have received much natural affection; God thus building the reverence and honour of superiors, upon the very ground of their affectionateness towards inferiors; ruling it so that natural affection should flow from him who hath the power, and that honour should ascend in return. All power of one human being over another is given by God, to the end of shedding downwards the grace of natural affection and kindness; and all inferiority and dependance of one human being upon another is appointed of the same God, to the end of receiving the descending stream of natural affection and kindness, and of sending upwards in return the ascending current of honour and gratitude and obedience. Thus doth God sanction and reward natural affection, in the family, and in the circles of kindred, and I may say, in general, in all the subordinate relations of life: and let this suffice in explanation of the end which natural affection serveth in the scheme of God.

3. We now proceed, Thirdly, to consider by what means it may be strengthened, and by what means impaired and destroyed. The great nourishment of natural affection, is faith; and whatever tends to the increase of faith, doth go to strengthen it; for all true affection resteth, not upon the things that are seen, but upon the things that are not seen. It is not any advantage, or any view of advantage, which moveth

the natural affection of parents to their children, of brothers, of spouses, of friends, to one another; but, on the other hand, so soon as the sense or desire of advantage ariseth in the mind, from that time forth the pure gold of affection is changed. Much profit, and much advantage—yea, all profit and advantage—do flow from the pure fountain of natural affection; even as the verdure and the foliage of a rich valley are derived from the stream which waters it. But, as the pure well-springs and fountain-heads of the river would be all sullied—yea, and poisoned—by casting into them the leaves and other superfluity of its verdant banks, which hasten down the stream to the purifying ocean; so may not the usefulness or profit which springeth and groweth of affection be mingled with the pure fountains thereof, without either staunching or poisoning their transparent, wholesome purity. Forasmuch, then, as affection refuseth to rest upon, neither will intermingle with, visible gifts or remunerations, though these be the natural fruits of the same; upon what doth it, or can it rest, but upon faith, which alone layeth not hold upon the visible? For all things which are not seen, are objects of faith. It is from faith, therefore, of things invisible, and from confidence in the unseen ties of the heart, from the conviction that all things seen and temporal have the law of their well-being thence, that affection proceedeth. The relationships of life are a great system of natural faith; and the well-being of a family, of a household—

of a state, is the precious fruit of natural faith. Whatever therefore tendeth to strengthen faith, must tend to strengthen natural affection; and whatever tendeth to weaken faith must tend to weaken natural affection. Now, the three great forms of unbelief are, *selfishness*, *worldliness*, and *wickedness*; whereof the first, by following out the law of our own will, and the inclination of our own personal ambition, pleasure, and aggrandizement, doth so far forth rise up against the supreme will of God, and the co-equal will of our neighbour, and doth thereby deny the supreme right, and practically disbelieve the Almighty providence of God,—setting up, instead thereof, a deification of ourselves, under the name of our destiny. This form of fallen humanity,—call it ambition, pride, tyranny, or what you please,—is the subversion of God himself, by the denial of his invisible power and authority, and therefore the most fatal to affection in all its forms. Affection cannot live in the breast of a selfish man, be he ever so great, be he ever so noble. All knowledge, all power, all accomplishments, all generosity even, and indifference to worldly applause, or emolument, will never, never, plant a tender true-hearted emotion of love in the bosom of a man who liveth for himself, and hath forgotten the humility of a creature towards his Creator, and the daily, hourly dependance of a creature upon his Creator. Let no man think that when he hath made ship-

wreck of faith in God, he can retain faith in any of the inferior relationships of creature to creature. Farewell henceforth to a son's dutifulness, a husband's love, a friend's faithfulness, a subject's loyalty. God preserve us all from pride, which is the snare of the devil.

2dly, Next to this, amongst the enemies of natural affection, is *worldliness*, or the love and desire of things that are seen;—which indeed is such a debasement of the human heart, such a monstrous alliance of the human soul to the matters of sight and of sense, that from thenceforth it yieldeth up the ambition, if I may so speak, of intermarrying affections with its kind. An earthworm, a covetous man, a man vain of the decorations, or intent upon the riches of the world, hath preferred things visible to things invisible, and exchanged the organ of faith for the organ of sight. To whom the Lord saith, “He is joined to his idols, let him alone;” and thus it cometh to pass, that we, the busy men of cities, who are so solicited with outward temptations, and drudged with worldly toils, have, yea, and can have, so little affection within our homes: and hence it is, that our children, are found destitute of reverence, and honour, and duty; given up to the indulgence of their wild humours and wicked senses, to an extent of which the honest inhabitants of less worldly places are happily ignorant. Oh! it paineth my heart to see how the world interposeth between affectionate hearts; those that are united

gradually parting asunder, and those that would unite preventing. What tender loves interest crosseth, what true friendships ambition marreth, what closely-entwined families disputes of inheritance convert into bitterest foes! See what trustful and trusted servants are daily tempted from their honoured masters by the allurements of worldly gain! what copartneries dissolved! what jealousies! what enmities! what lawsuits! what quarrels! what murders! what wars! what devastations! All these quench the fountains of affection, and destroy the beautiful verdure and plentiful fruits which grow along its streams.

3dly, We place *wickedness*, that is, the breach of God's moral laws, and the indulgence of wicked passions, as the next great destroyer of natural affection.—Wickedness depraves the heart, and consumes its hidden treasures. Every act of sin operateth like a surfeit, to take away our relish for wholesome food. If it be a wickedness which terminates in self, such as avarice, or intemperate indulgence of ourselves with the creatures of God, then it acts like poison upon the moral constitution of the heart, benumbing it, paralyzing it, deadening it. If again it be wickedness transacted against the rights of another, it is a direct denial of, and insurrection against, the rights of affection. If it be the indulgence of envy or jealousy, and the meditation of revenge, then is it likewise the direct attack upon affection. And I may say

in general, that wickedness, being a breach of the Divine commandment, and so far forth an offence to faith, doth go to harden the heart, both towards God and towards man; and these three, selfishness, worldliness, and wickedness, I do regard as the three chief enemies unto natural affection; and thus have we the ground completely cleared for deciding the question, whether or not these be the latterdays which are characterised by the want of natural affection.

If, as hath been said, the three great enemies of natural affection be selfishness, worldliness, and wickedness, and the great sustenance of it be faith, we may at any time know the conditions of a people by ascertaining the strength of these its great hindrances, and of this its great support. Now we have already shewn, under the two former heads of unthankful and unholy, in how low a state is the faith of the church, by judging, both from the want of grace in her every-day actions, and from her want of spiritual discernment of the ordinances of the church. And we believe there are no two tests of faith so unexceptionable as these. And if, as we proved, the faith of the church be so low, that in her actions, there is hardly more grace than in the actions of the world, and the intercourse of Christians be regulated upon the principle of justice and reciprocity, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, not upon the evangelical principle of grace and forgiveness; and if the faith of the church be so undiscerning as

to see little or nothing in the ordinances but the outward signs or symbols ; then how should it be otherwise than that affection which, we have shewn, doth hold entirely of the invisible, should be also at a very low ebb in the church ? And still more clearly must this conviction be felt by thoughtful men, if it should appear that the three antagonist principles have gained a head in the same proportion in which the friendly principle hath suffered loss. Now, is it not remarkable that the first characteristic of the last times should be "lovers of their own selves;" and the second "covetousness," or, as it is in the original, "lovers of money," which is seldom loved for its own sake, but for the sake of the visible goods which its value representeth. Here then we have the two first of the three great destroyers of affection, occupying the very head of this wicked column ; and when treating of them we shewed how truly characteristic they were of the time in which we lived, whereof the religion had no higher respect than to a man's self, that is, his own personal condition ; and seldom embraced the communion of the saints, or contemplated the higher object of the honour of Christ, and the glory of God ; and whereof we shewed that worldly transactions were nothing better than one great race to be rich. And next to these in the fatal roll are "boasters, proud, blasphemers," which come under the same classification of selfishness and worldliness ; boasting being the character of one who holdeth himself in higher esteem than he ought to do, while blasphemy is

the character of one who hath cast off allegiance unto God : so that every one of the preceding characteristics do bear upon this one of natural affection, and combine their influence to prove that it is declining greatly in the midst of us.

But it may be said, What direct proofs can you adduce upon this head ? To this I reply, in the first place, that all which I formerly advanced under the head of "disobedience to parents," which is one branch of natural affection, doth apply to this also, and indeed doth bear even more directly upon this than upon that head. There were, 1st, The want of natural affection shewn by parents to children ; so that it should have been necessary for the legislature to interfere in their behalf, between the unnatural parent and the sordid master. 2dly, The want of affection on the part of children to their parents, so that they should be cast in such numbers upon the parish. 3dly, The necessity which good people have found of stepping in between parents and children, with the succour of Sabbath and Infant Schools. And 4thly, The lamentations of the judges of the land over the many times multiplied calendars of juvenile, I had almost said childish, offenders. These I repeat here again as demonstrations, so far as they go, of the truth, that our text applies to these times ; and of other evidences, because it is painful, I shall observe these two only : First, How much less there is of home, and the enjoyments of home, in our days than in the days of our fathers. And next, How much less of affection, how much more of

ostentation, in our hospitality than in that of our fathers, to whom the present customs of fashionable intercourse would have been almost incomprehensible.

Now, I consider home to be to man's natural affections what the nest of its young is to the affections of the fowls of heaven: but if we should see the birds of heaven forsaking their young and callow brood, in order to contend in song, in beauty of plumage, or in rapidity of flight, to enjoy themselves in flocks when they ought to be providing for their young, and teaching their young how to provide for themselves, what would we say, but that natural affection had intermitted its course, and a wonderful thing had come to pass in the animal creation? But, ah! how truly doth it so fare with families in these our times, when all the day is spent in business or in vanity, and all the nights in feasting or in greater vanity. Between the oppression of business, and the oppression of fashion, the tender, and delicate, and blessed abode of our natural affections, which our fathers called *home*, hath been almost crushed to pieces, and the very word hath changed its meaning; so that 'at home' now signifies being surrounded with a multitude, and 'not at home' almost signifies being alone with your children. And for hospitality, which is another sphere of natural affection, wider than home, how much it hath suffered from the same evil causes, be ye also judges: for, first of all, it hath been

crushed clean out of the day into the hours of night, and is postponed to the Exchange and the Post-office. It hath the hours which should be spent with our families at home, and many of those which should be spent in sleep: and when thus shuffled out of time, and purchased at such expense of family comfort, how seldom is it any tribute of natural affection given and received! how frequently the boastful profusion of expense, to be followed by a brilliant display of vanity, and even this given and returned upon an exact and well-balanced debtor and creditor account! If, again, I look for natural affection between master and servant, where am I to find it in these times; when a servant gives his master warning upon the slightest discontent, and a master breaks up his establishment and sends his servants adrift upon the slightest convenience? But what need of entering into particulars, when by a general fact we can include all particulars, and shew the very disposition of the time to be against natural affection. The fact I refer to is the promulgation of what was called the French Philosophy by many able men in these parts some thirty years ago; of which the root is this; That we should love all men alike; and that the preferences which we shew to the more intimate relationships is a prejudice, and an offence to this uniformity and equality of love. Now, though the strength of our religious and civil establishments hath beat back this hideous philosophy (falsely so called), and forced it to work

in secret, yet that it hath been working in secret, and that it is the very same with that liberality which is now catching all places like wild-fire, I have no doubt. And that the tendency of this liberality is to destroy the foundations of faith, is manifest from the character of those who are its high priests and apostles; of whom the general character is, that they have made shipwreck of their faith, and are, as much as public opinion will allow, loosened from the obligations of duty and the bonds of affection. It is an abortive attempt to reach liberty and well-being without observing the conditions upon which God hath made liberty and well-being to be dependant. And in an age when liberality is the object of universal worship, and public opinion of men, not the word of God, is the common law, nothing else is to be expected but a dissolution of the bonds of natural affection and the increase of crime in every direction. And with this solemn repetition of a truth, which I suppose for the hundredth time I repeat, I conclude this head of the want of natural affection.

Now, dear brethren, in conclusion, I entreat you to give heed unto the things which have been spoken, and to believe assuredly that the discharge of every office of affection is the best preparation for the growth of faith, which doth convert the instinct of affection into an obligation of duty. Now, if any man neglect the natural call of the Creator's voice, which calleth us to

affection, he can hardly expect to receive the gift of faith, which doth renew and sanctify nature to the service of God our Redeemer. 2dly, The best fruit and evidence of faith is the more diligent, and the more enlarged, and the more tender fulfilment of all the duties which even nature teacheth. Affection now becometh religion, and inclination becometh righteousness. The more earnestly, therefore, do I entreat you to walk in the constant fulfilment of all your relative duties one to another, and to look upon them as institutions of Christ for the preservation of the world, and its preparation for receiving the seed of the word. Thus do, dearly beloved brethren, and you shall find that which is written to be true,—that in the keeping of his commandments there is a great reward.

SERMON VIII.

TRUCE-BREAKERS.

2 TIM. iii. 1, 3.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be truce-breakers.

UPON that natural affection whereof we discoursed last Lord's day, ariseth, as upon a basis, the superstructure of all covenants and agreements which man formally entereth into with man, and over which he taketh solemn instruments either before God or before men. These covenants, or contracts, were wont, in former times, to be confirmed by some notable act, and their memory to be preserved by some durable monument; for example, when Abraham entered into covenant with God; or, to begin more early, when God entered into covenant with Noah, it was done over a sacrifice, and the memorial of it was the rainbow in the heavens. And when God entered into covenant with Abraham for the possession of the land of Canaan, it was over the sacrifice of an heifer, and a ram, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon; and the memorial of it in due time was the rite of cir-

cumcision. Again, when Jacob entered into covenant with God at Padan-aram, he set up a pillar for a memorial, and poured out upon it a libation of oil. And again, when he entered into covenant with Laban, it is thus written, "Let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be a witness between me and thee. And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar; and Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones; and they took stones, and made a heap, and they did eat there upon the heap." And so in ancient times it was in general use, at the making of a covenant, to take God to witness, and to offer a sacrifice unto God, and to pour out a libation or drink-offering. For the drink-offering was that which perfected the sacrifice. Thus when God appeared the second time unto Jacob, at Padan-aram, Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone; and he poured a drink-offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon. And at the daily offering of the lamb, morning and evening, upon the great altar they poured out the fourth part, or an hin of wine, for a drink-offering: so also at the offering of the feast of first-fruits, and at the consecration of the Nazarite, and on other public occasions. But this rite or ceremony was extended also to private vows and free-will offerings, as we see it written in the xvth of Numbers. And not only was it the order for the children of Israel, but also for the stranger that sojourned in the land.

This ordinance of making a libation, or pouring out a drink-offering upon occasion of any covenant entered into with God, or with our fellow-men, or even with our own conscience as in the making of a vow, being thus authorised by God, and practised by his saints from the earliest times; being the daily practice of the holy and covenant people; came into general use amongst the heathen also, and indeed forms the root of the word which is translated "truce-breakers" in the text, and "implacable" in the corresponding passage of the Romans. The word being, when literally translated, "men without libations;" that is to say, men who took no interest whatever in the sacrifices and the feasts in which men were wont to make libations to the gods, for the sake of confirming friendship, or any holy covenant, or any holy agreement. The word includes not only such as betray their pledged faith, and break the covenants into which they have entered, but those also who burn with an implacable hatred against others, and admit, as it were, no libations of covenants human or Divine, of friendship or religion. And therefore, in the passage already referred to in the first of the Romans, it is translated "implacable," and represents another class besides covenant breakers: "Covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable;" that is, one who not only hath violated his covenants, but who hath so far departed from the reverence and the love of the sacred ordinances of society,

as to have become of a wild, inconstant, unrestrained, and unrestrainable disposition, who hath as it were undone the bonds and obligations of social life, and longeth to return back again into the savage and unsocial state; being indeed that very spirit which it was the object of Rousseau's writings to cultivate, and of Byron's poetry to express—the anti-social, dis-social, truce-breaking spirit, which we shall shew, in the sequel, worketh like a corrosive poison in the bowels of society. Having thus endeavoured to give you a distinct idea of this characteristic of the last times, we shall now proceed to open in order: first, The nature and importance of the obligations referred to. 2dly, The things which tend to strengthen, and the things which tend to weaken and dissolve them. And lastly, Point out the operation of these dissolving and destructive principles in this our day.

With respect to covenants then, it is to be observed that they are of three kinds: 1st, Those which we enter into with God; 2dly, Those which we enter into with the state; and 3dly, Those which we enter into privately with one another. And I might perhaps add a 4th, Those which we enter into with ourselves. Of Divine covenants, the great sacrifice is the body of Christ; and the libation, or drink-offering, is his blood. And every man who sitteth down at the Lord's table doth bind himself unto this covenant; and every man who hath his child baptised doth likewise bind his child under this covenant,

which includeth the obedience of all the Divine commandments, and especially of all the ordinances and institutions of Christ; such as the only worship of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the keeping holy the Sabbath-day, the observance of all the ordinances of God's worship, the honour of the rulers of his church duly ordained to sacred things, the keeping of the marriage vow, the obedience of the magistrate, together with all the more private and personal duties enjoined in God's holy commandments. Of this covenant, so large and inclusive, the church is the guardian, and the discipline of the church is nothing else but the attendance of the rulers of the church upon this very thing; to see that the members of Christ fulfil those obligations for which Christ their Surety did impledge his precious life. The church, in the exercise of discipline, occupying exactly the same place between Christ and his members, which the judges occupy between the king and his liege subjects: in both cases, the laws are given to our hand, and may not by the guardians of the law be infringed. We have our laws in the word of God, which, if you, the members of Christ, do break, we, the guardians of the church's holiness, are obliged by our ordination vows to take cognizance of the same, according to the rules and ordinances of the word of God.—Of the same kind, and after the same way protected, are covenants of a public kind which we enter into, or rather are

born into, as the free-born subjects of the kingdom. These all rest, in a Christian land, and under a Christian government, upon the basis of one article of the Divine covenant; which is, that Christians must give subjection and pay tribute to the powers that be. This, I say, binds the allegiance of every Christian to any government, Christian, un-Christian, or anti-Christian, where his lot is cast; and this same article of the Divine covenant obliges every Christian government to require such obedience from the members of the church. A Christian government may not, upon its responsibility to Christ, the King of kings, absolve any Christian layman or clergyman from his obedience to the laws of the kingdom. The king must keep his state like a king over all Christians as subjects, or else God will remove him from his kingdom. The church—with her members, deacons, elders, and bishops, her presbyteries, synods, and general assemblies—is but a subject, and doth only become a subject the more because she is the church; and to have permitted appeals to the bishop of Rome in secular matters, and wholly to have loosed the priesthood from the authority of the magistrate, is the great capital offence of the papal nations,—for which they have been judged, and shall be condemned. And the great bulwark of this nation, by which she holdeth prerogative with God, is, that the king hath resumed his right over the obedience of his Christian people, and doth exercise it,

not in opposition to, but in accordance with, the laws of Christ; not against, but in the spirit of the Gospel. On the other hand, the duties which we owe to the king can never absolve us from the duties which we owe to the King of kings; which principle is in practice this, that a Christian government may not interfere in the discipline of the Christian church, so as either directly or indirectly to work upon or influence its righteous decisions. And the rulers of the church who permit themselves thus to be invaded, are guilty of the highest treason against the holiness of Christ the Priest; just as the state, which permitteth itself to be invaded by the church, is guilty of the highest treason against the power and kingdom of Christ.

Having thus stated out these the foundations of the church and the state, with the grounds of our obligations unto both, I proceed to observe, that the covenants of a political kind by which we are bound, include all honour and loyalty to the person of the king, as the vicegerent of Christ, the head of magistracy, the fountain of honour, the dispenser of mercy, the preserver of justice, the protector of the innocent against the guilty, the leader of the forces, and in general the great depository of executive power within the kingdom. And along with the king, we owe our reverence to his high courts of Parliament, who share with him the privilege, and divide with him the trust, of making the laws and statutes of the kingdom. And after them we

owe reverence to all judges and magistrates, and persons in authority over us, under the king. These are not free-will offerings, coming under the head of *gracious* or *eucharistical*, in which we have seen the times to be so deficient; but they are acts growing out of the covenant which is established between the king and the subject; into which covenant though we do not formally enter, yet verily doth every alien before he can possess our rights and immunities as free-born subjects of the kingdom. And if to the persons who administer the offices of the state, this covenant of subjection is not to be broken, how much more towards the laws and constitution of the kingdom which they do administer! for that even the king ruleth under law and ordinance is manifest from this, that by oath, by solemn oath, in the presence of the nobles of the kingdom he taketh and holdeth the sceptre, he receiveth and weareth the crown; so that even the crowned king, Christ's vicergerent, doth acknowledge the Christian constitution of the kingdom to be higher than he: in token whereof he receiveth the crown from the hand of one of Christ's ministers. I mention this, not out of any priestly pride, nor radical intolerance of power, but to shew the excellent wisdom of our Constitution, in thus declaring, not only in the ceremony of consecration, but also in a set discourse, by whom it is that kings reign and princes decree justice; and likewise to shew forth the exceeding great

majesty of law, whose seat Hooker doth well say is the bosom of God, to which our sceptered and crowned kings do thus yield reverence; and if they, how much more ought all degrees of their subjects so to do! I have it also in my mind, by the statement of these solemn truths, to rebuke that poor and barren notion of law, as of a thing which the legislature maketh, and which the legislature annulleth. Whereas I say, that the legislature is only the expositor of law, and neither can, nor may, alter or subvert the Christian constitutions of the state; which Christian constitutions the present apostate state of Christendom hath necessarily forced to become every one of them Protestant. For when the great powers of Christendom have broken the covenant, and changed the everlasting ordinance, what is left for the solitary state which would take up a testimony against the abuse, but to protest? Seeing there is no other way of telling out the truth, in the midst of its adversaries, but the way of protestation. This, which many of you will think a point of lesser importance, is truly a very great point in our present argument; for hereby I shall bring home one of my charges against this generation, that they have forgotten the Protestant argument for all the great fundamental laws and ordinances of the kingdom, and so have broken truce or covenant with the political estate.

From this I now turn to the third kind of covenants, which are private covenants be-

tween man and man ; amongst which, the first place is due to the covenant of marriage, which doth solemnly recognise the relations of the two great divisions of the human kind, and ratify and confirm them by the laws of God and man ; requiring on the part of man righteous and loving government, and on the part of woman dutiful and loving obedience, and on the part of both community of goods, interests, and affections. This is the covenant of wedlock, under whose united and consociated canopy all the health and prosperity of the rising generation doth grow.—Next to this private covenant I place the covenant of honesty, under which exchange of goods is conducted : this is the basis of all trade, commerce, and exchange ; and it requireth of the seller to put fair and equitable value upon his wares, according to what they cost him in their production, with that addition which it is necessary for him honestly to live by ; and it requireth on the part of the buyer to believe the honest statement which the seller hath made, and not to mistrust him, nor yet to tempt him to take less than he ought to take ; then when the bargain or covenant (for every bargain is a covenant) is concluded, it is required of them that they should stand to the terms thereof, and give and receive according to the very letter of the engagement.—Besides these, there is the covenant of master and servant, which requireth on the one hand the privileges of our house, its religion, its trust,

its kindly protection, together with the full payment of the stipulated wages of the service; while on the other hand it requireth faithfulness to our master's trust, respect unto his person, obedience to his commandments, and observance of the rules of his house, with an entire devotedness to his interest.—Besides these, the constant, and I may say necessary, covenants of a private kind, there be others also of friendship, such as that between Jonathan and David; of betrothment, such as that between Joseph and the Virgin, and for the regulation of which Paul giveth so many directions to the Corinthians; and I may say there is a covenant of neighbourhood, to be friendly one with another; and of society, and of country, to stand together for the common weal; and, in short, I may say, that all the positive laws and institutions, yea, and customs, of a civilized people, are so many covenants whereby they bind and contract themselves to one another, according to their various relations, and to which they become bound by certain sanctions and penalties which attend upon their violation. Covenants they are which express the eternal truths of the conscience of man, and lay restraints upon the violent passions, and selfish dispositions, and ruthless out-breakings of his nature; in which covenants to walk doth bespeak a mild, and gentle, and just, and pious disposition; which covenants to neglect, and set at nought, doth argue a heady, proud, rebellious, cruel, and implacable nature. These covenants are the outward forms of jus-

tice and equity ; as the relationships of society are the outward forms of natural affection, as the ordinances of the church are the outward forms of grace. I say not that any one should be contented with the mere justice of the covenant, but should infuse into it the sweetness of affection, and hallow it with the unction of grace ; of which grace, alas ! we have shewn how destitute are the men of these times, of which affection also we have shewn how naked they be. And now it remaineth that we shew how far short they come even of bare justice ; how they violate their covenants to God, to the kingdom, and to one another ; in opening which, the third head of my discourse, I will follow, one after another, that three-fold division of covenants, and with a heavy heart, believe me, establish, that in these the last days men are indeed “ truce-breakers.”

With respect to the first and highest order of Divine covenants which I have opened as above, or the obedience of the Divine laws, I have to observe, as a proof of the total indifference thereto which now obtaineth, that discipline, which is the outward defence against the violations of Divine laws, hath utterly ceased from the church. Discipline is a thing which hath been and is no longer ; I would that this proceeded from their being no call for it. But, alas ! such a state of the church hath never been, and never will be, wherein the exercise of discipline should be uncalled for ; as no kingdom hath ever existed in which there was no necessity for tribunals of

justice, and sentences of judgment. In fact, every man living, who hath any sense or discernment of things, doth feel how much need there is of discipline among the baptized members of Christ's church, including all men in the kingdom, or almost all; even those who are daily called before the courts of law as violators of justice. Now, how indifferent the church hath become to the laws of God, judge by this, that she careth not that her members should be every day tried in courts of justice—she groundeth no proceedings against them—she taketh no cognisance of them. In which observe another proof, amongst many, how much more holy the state is than the church, or rather, how much more the violations of the laws which respect visible things are attended upon by those who have the care thereof, than are the violations of those laws which have God for their author, and the issues of eternity for their sanction. To those who can understand the subject, this extinction of discipline not only proveth that the laws and covenants of God are broken, but that they are indeed become a dead letter; and that the church, as a body corporate, set for the example and guidance of all other corporations of the state, and within the state, has ceased from that high and holy office. It is a church no longer in a state of order, when the powers of order have ceased to exercise their functions. It is no longer a finely organized body, bound together by the laws of God, whose due observance it continually at-

tendeth on; but an indiscriminate multitude, by random influences bound together, and observing no laws. Now, as the duty to God is the parent of all duty, and the obligation to Christ's church the ground of all obligations, we may well believe into what a state all covenants have come, when the covenants of the church are thus disowned. I speak not in particular of the broken vows of baptism, which have become almost or altogether despised and rejected of men. I speak not of the vows of the priest's ordination, which the spirit of liberality hath completely broken down; so that a Presbyterian is not a Presbyterian, nor an Episcopalian an Episcopalian, nor a Protestant a Protestant, though most solemnly bound thereto. Oh, oh! my heart is broken when I look at the state of the church; how all its bulwarks and barriers are broken down, as it were, on very purpose to invite the attack and invasion of the destroyer! God have mercy upon us; for in our blindness, and madness, and stupid folly, we have ceased to have any pity upon ourselves.

If from this painful topic of Divine covenants, I turn to look upon the second order of covenants; namely, political, of which the highest class is that between nation and nation, what have we witnessed within the eventful period of the last thirty years? We have witnessed the sacred laws of nations, which Christianity had introduced, but which were unknown in ancient times, trampled under foot. We have seen the relations between nation and

nation broken up by the violence of republican and infidel ambition. We have seen, and we still do see through Christendom, the sacred covenant between king and subject set aside, to answer the ends of territorial aggrandizement, and to balance the accounts of ambitious kings. Oh, they know not how they are laying the axe to the root of the tree, when they think they are but dressing it to suit their depraved taste; and even now, to gratify classical sentiment, alliances are formed, not only of arbitrary kings, but also what are called liberal states, which go directly to the intermeddling between a king and his subjects, and the fostering of disloyal and rebellious inclinations. These are things not to be denied. They are written in the history of the last thirty years; and though for a long time, this our kingdom stood alone for the ancient constitution of international law, even we, I fear, are now beginning to be taken with the same covenant-breaking spirit. If now I look to a lower class of political covenants; namely, those which bind a nation into one; what do I find? Where is loyalty to the person of our king; or to the persons of those under the king, who exercise his prerogative, the servants and ministers of the crown? Is it not the truth, that the dignity of an office-bearer in the state is only the occasion of the more critical observation, and severe censure and obloquy? It is hateful, yea it is execrable, to see with what delight the eyes of men do gloat

over the failings, and the ears of men do delight in the evil report, of their rulers. If there be one characteristic of the times in which we live, it is the total dissolution in the hearts of men of the covenant between the subject and the king. And those who lead the way in this crusade against dignities, do take into their mouths very tender and loving language towards the people whom they would instruct, whom they would edify, make virtuous, and enlightened. So harped the rulers of the reign of terror, when, without form of law, or shew of justice, the most worthy magistrates and citizens were executed daily. If, again descending, we look unto the covenant between the people and the representatives of the people, what hath it become all England over, but a system of bribery and intemperance? If, again, we look at the covenant between the existing functionaries and the Protestant constitutions of the state itself, so far from being respected, it is become discreditable to respect them. The very idea of their acting under a Christian state hath been forgotten in the liberality of this age. And as to our being a Protestant state, it is utterly scouted. But, as the Lord liveth, whose providence granted unto us this singular prerogative of being a Protestant state, the one condition of protesting against the Papacy, is the bond of our National Covenant, in every oath incorporated from the king's oath of coronation, the oath of the peers and of the commons, down to the oath of the

lowest functionary of the state. But it is trodden under foot. It is mangled in wild sport. It is mocked at in jest, as if a covenant were a farce, and the bond of the nation were a toy. My heart is like to break, when I look and behold that holy banner trodden under foot, which our fathers looked upon as the symbol of God's presence in the land.

From this descending to private covenants, and following still the order of our discourse, if I speak of the covenant of husband and wife, what a loosing and undoing of that holy bond do we witness! when no longer the sacred obligation is lighted at the altar of God, but the convenience of custom, the eye of the world, mutual interest, seem to bind the sexes to one another. I do not speak of gross adultery: I do not speak of unfaithfulness, undisguised or disguised: but I speak of the righteous and loving government of man, and the dutiful and loving obedience of woman; which is no longer revered. It is no longer spoken of; it is no longer found. To speak of one another with good-natured gaiety; to neglect one another with easy good-breeding; to let one another go their several ways unchecked; to make sprightly allusions and sparkling witticisms on the relation of husband and wife—this, even this, is the present estate of that everlasting covenant. And when of such looseness in the idea cometh looseness in the act, the adulterer is treated with some gay epithet, and the abused

husband with some contemptuous emblem. And this is holy matrimony!—Yea, the very bond of life, the covenant of marriage, has been assailed with direct argument, and woman hath learned to assert that it is an invasion of her rights. And, in the first out-bursting of the infidel spirit, (which is closely to be studied, as the demonstration of its true nature and ultimate consummation, just as the mathematician takes the first fluxion of a variable quantity, and thereby comes at its completion), marriage was actually abolished, as a restraint upon the rights of men and women too. Such is liberality!

And if I am to speak of the next class of private covenants; those between the buyer and the seller, which regulate the exchange of the bounties of Providence; what can I say strong enough to express the present dissolved and dissolving condition of that covenant? Whether by the fraudulency of the seller putting many falsehoods upon the head of every thing he sell-eth; whether by the unprincipled cheapening down of the buyer, until the poor seller, needy of money, hath not wherewithal to live; whether by the system of capitalists fattening upon the dry bones of needy manufacturers; or of manufacturers living upon the last exhausted strength of their meagre and weary workmen, and afterwards consigning them to public charity; whether by the unheard-of lists of bankruptcies, the disappointed creditors, the broken faith

of bondsmen, or by whatever criterion you please to try this, the covenant of the buyer and seller shall be tried; and I will ask a verdict of truce-breakers against this generation, above all generations of whom there is any record: I will ask it from the greatest friend and favourer of the present times. Oh! how the glory of honesty and incorruptible faith is departed from the midst of us!—But I am weary, my heart is weary; yet my mind is not exhausted, in opening this topic of our general discourse: for to speak of friendship, the very name of it is derided; shrewd self-interest, knowledge of men, and of the world, hath put an end to all that idle talk. If I speak of betrothment, arising out of a covenant of true-hearted affection, how rare it is, in comparison of betrothments from interest, from rank, and other good connexions!

I cannot finish this subject; it is so painful. Enough has been said to demonstrate the truth of the text. I would that proof had been more difficult to find; I would that it had been exhausted. In conclusion, I exhort you to stand true to all your engagements, come what will: come dishonour, discredit, imprisonment, disgrace, violate not your plighted truth: seek again for the long-lost feelings of fealty and loyalty to the king and magistrates. Seek again the long-lost reverence to the church: make a zealous debate for the rights of conscience; and look upon a covenant as the law of God upon the

which our word *dévil* is made, *δίαβολος*, which, in the French, is *diable*, and so with a little variation, in all the other languages of Europe. And this name, no doubt, he hath obtained from his wicked office, “the accuser of the brethren, which accuseth them before our God day and night;” of which his wicked function, and the fulfilment of it, we have a specimen in the first two chapters of Job. There are many passages of Scripture which are translated specifically of the devil, which would perhaps admit, and indeed prefer, the more general translation of *the adversary*, or *slanderer*, or *accuser*. Any way, it will serve the end of opening the meaning and application of the word, to consult one or two of these. It is said, Eph. iv. 27, “Be angry, and sin not; let not the sun go down on your wrath; neither give place to the devil,” or accuser; that is to say, Suffer not yourselves to remain in that state of wrath and vexation towards any one, which would open the way for the slanderer and defamer to prejudice you against him, whether that slanderer be Satan himself, suggesting evil to our mind, or some servant of Satan. Another instance of the like kind is in 1 Tim. iii. 6, 7, where it is required of a bishop, that he be not a novice, lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil, or accuser; and, in the next verse, he must have a good report of them which are without, lest he fall into reproach and the

snare of the devil. In these pride is called the crime of the accuser, as being that out of which Satan's diabolical character, and the diabolical character of those who are like him, doth grow. And a good report, or a fair name from the world in general, is set in opposition to the snare of the devil, which shews that the meaning of the word "devil" is one who reproacheth, or taketh away our good name. On this account Judas was called a devil. "One of you is a devil," because he accused and betrayed Christ. In like manner, Jesus saith of the Jews, who sought to kill him, and endeavoured to cast reproach upon his high calling, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lust (or likings) of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it." This passage containeth the two passions of the mind, which go to make up the character of an accuser; which are, that he be a murderer, or one who delights to destroy the good name of his neighbour through malice, or envy, or spite; and that he be a liar, or one who will not hesitate to depart from the truth in order to serve his wicked ends. Malice and falsehood are the ingredients of a false accuser or slanderer. It appears, then, from these inquiries into the meaning and use of the word rendered false accusers, that it pointeth at a class of

people much more numerous and common than the English word would have led us at first thought to suppose; and that it referreth not merely to false accusations made before the magistrate, nor to delations of public and responsible office-bearers, but, in general, to any malicious, false, and uncalled-for accusation, or censure, or slander of one another, in the ordinary intercourse of society, not indeed to the exclusion of the more public forms of bearing false witness, which we likewise include in the class under review.

Let us now address ourselves, in the second place, to consider whence ariseth, and wherein consisteth the evil of this practice. The law by which God hath bound us to one another, under the Gospel, is the law of love. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" and our Lord, in the parable of the good Samaritan, hath defined our neighbour to include every man, though of the most opposite party, and the most hostile nation to us, and to those we call our friends. For no two nations or religious sects were more opposite to one another, than the Jews and Samaritans, who contended concerning most important questions of religion, and looked upon one another as defrauders of the truth of God. Yet did our Lord, when pressed for a definition of the term neighbour, by a certain rich and pious Jew, reply in such wise as to signify, yea, and to extort from himself the confession, that the

Samaritan was his neighbour, whom he required him to love as himself. The further to deliver this Divine law of love, from the traditions of men, which will always be interpreting it away, he devotes to it the most considerable part of his Sermon on the Mount, shewing unto his disciples how they should not relax in the observance of this law towards any man, with whatever violence and malignity he may carry himself towards them, saying, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

The same royal law of charity, or love, do the Apostles lay as the ground of all Christian fellowship, whether with Christians or with the world, whether with friends or with enemies; and they deduce it directly from the great principle of the Gospel, which is the grace of God, and the love of Christ, abounding to the chief of sinners over the head of all their sins, the patience and long-suffering of God's judgment over the world, which condemned itself in condemning Christ, and the patience of Christ to remain hidden and withdrawn from the possession of his kingdom, in order that the long-suffering of his Father, to the guilty and condemned world, might the more abundantly appear; and seeing that this is the great principle of the Divine revelation in Jesus Christ, it necessarily becometh the great principle in all who are baptized into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, who having

received the forgiveness of their sins out of free grace, and, through free grace, continuing to stand in the Divine favour; notwithstanding the perennial fountain of sin, which ever springeth from the soil of their evil nature; and, in virtue of the same baptism, having received the Holy Ghost, which proceedeth from the Father and the Son, and openeth, in the good soil of our spiritual nature, the pure fountain of grace, which is in the Father and in the Son; we do become, as the ministers of God, his royal priesthood upon the earth, for the shewing forth and dispensing unto others of that free grace and healing charity which we have derived from the Father and the Son, and received in the Holy Ghost, without money and without price. And forasmuch as the grace of God hath appeared unto all, bringing salvation, and doth exclude no one, however wretched and miserable, but the rather, according to their sore sicknesses, doth the more earnestly invite and the more tenderly entreat them; so, even so divinely, ought we, who are baptized into the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, to shed abroad upon every side, and without any reservation, the beams of that grace and truth which we have received from the fulness of Christ. Alas! alas! it is not God's poverty, nor God's unwillingness to give, which hindereth men from obtaining and possessing; but it is their own unwillingness to receive, their own fatal obstinacy withholding them from believing upon Him whom he hath sent. For is there one who believeth, that may

not be baptized? God offereth to them his Christ, the fulness of the Godhead, the riches of grace and truth, to believe upon. What hindereth that they should believe and be baptized? And is not baptism the covenant of the three persons of the Godhead, for the forgiveness of sins, and the receiving of the Holy Ghost? The like liberality, the like indifference of love, ought our souls to carry towards all the fallen children of men; casting upon them the blame of not possessing, removing from ourselves the blame of not giving. And while we offer a burning heart of love to kindle and enlighten every man, let it be of that love which is entwined with truth, and with righteousness, and with holiness, which hath no fellowship with wickedness; and while it flows from God, abides in God, and returns back to God; seeking, in the widest procession and the lowest descent, to gather up from the depths of sin, and to bring back from the farthest distance of alienation every child of Adam who hath fallen, and now lieth in this estate of sin and misery. Such a godlike gift of love will draw some, whom the Father moveth, will alienate many, will judge all: yet ours is not the office of judging—they will judge themselves; we would save them, but they would not be saved—we would have healed them, but they would not be healed—we said Peace, but our peace abode not with them, and returned unto us again—we said Brother, but they brake the brotherly covenant—we

mourned for them as if they had been our brothers; and we bowed down heavily for them, as one that mourneth for his mother; but they turned a deaf ear to the voice of our love, and they turned our mourning into derision—when we fasted for them, and clothed ourselves with sackcloth, that was to our condemnation—when we shewed them the fearful wrath and judgment of the Lord, and entreated them to accept the overtures of his grace, they gnashed upon us with their teeth, and roared against us like a lion roaring for his prey.

Such, dear brethren, is the royal law of love; in its principle, in its practice, and in its ordinary effects, upon a guilty and a gainsaying world. Such our Lord experienced it to be, and such will his church, which is set for the fellowship of his sufferings, ever experience it to be. And what then remaineth for us thus turned back from the course of our grace and love by the truth and holiness, which form an essential part of our gift, and a constant attendant upon our path? When the wickedness of men will not receive the grace of God, which is in Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of sins; when they blaspheme the holy name of Jesus, and ignominiously entreat the messengers of grace, whom he hath sent, some stoning, and some putting to death, are we to become accusers before God of these the enemies of his Son and of his church? Are we to set forth in order the injuries which we have received at their hands,

and deprecate upon their heads the judgments of the Lord? Are we to become their impeachers, their prosecutors? This is the question which toucheth the matter of our discourse. It is said, that in the last times the church shall become accusers; not *false accusers*, as saith our version, but simply *accusers*, bringers forward of the accusation, be it well or ill grounded: for in either case, the church of Christ is not to be an accuser, but an intercessor. And it is wholly to change the ordinance of the church, to belie the witness of Christ, and to defeat the end of God, that she should become in any case an accuser. For we are not come to the blood of Abel, which crieth from the ground against his murderer, the fratricidal Cain, but we are come to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel crying from the ground for mercy, mercy upon those who shed it; even as Peter, moved by the Holy Ghost, did preach unto the Jews, saying, "they denied the Holy One, and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto them, and killed the Prince of Life. Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."

To understand more completely the nature of our true vocation towards those who reject our ministry of grace and love from the Father and the Son, by the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, let me open to you a little what followed upon the

rejection and crucifixion of Christ Jesus, our Saviour. After that, as the messenger of peace and reconciliation between God and man, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, to take away the sins of the world, he had been rejected and despised of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; being ascended up on high, and exalted to the right hand of God, when he had entered into all power in heaven and on earth; O, what office! O, what function! in the plenitude of his free choice and omnipotent power did he assume unto himself, and hath he since fulfilled? Is it not the office of Intercessor with the Father? How presenteth he himself before the Majesty of the throne on high? Is it not as a Lamb which hath been slain, pleading, with the wounds of his sinless body, the cause of a sinful world? And when the Father, in reward of his obedience unto the death, had bestowed upon him the Holy Ghost without measure, for what purpose did he use the willing services of that Divine person of the ever-blessed Trinity? Was it not to anoint with the fulness of power, and with cloven tongues of preaching, those Apostles who had forsaken him, and fled; and through them, as the chosen vessels of dignity and power, to convey it to those inhabitants of Jerusalem who had been guilty of rejecting and crucifying him? And when that hardened nation put away life, and preferred death, did he not send these his gifted mes-

sengers unto us poor Gentiles, who were dishonouring God, and debasing ourselves, with all manner of idolatry and wickedness. And those confessors and martyrs, who bore his reproach, and suffered for his sake at the hand of Pagans, when they were received into heaven, did they appear there as accusers? Nay, but hear the word of the Lord: "I heard a loud voice, saying in heaven, Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night; and they overcame him by the blood of the lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death." Such was the spirit of the holy martyrs, the fruit of their sufferings and death, prevailing not to lay an accusation before God, but utterly to cast the accuser out. Thus Christ doth propagate in his people that same spirit of intercession in the midst of suffering which he exemplified, when he said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" which Stephen continued in these words, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge;" and which every martyr, yea, and every meek disciple of Jesus, whether called to testify unto the death or not, hath continued unto this day upon the earth, offering prayers and intercessions even for their enemies, for their persecutors, and for their murderers; in virtue of which intercession, propagated from the Head, downwards, into all the members,

and thence proceeding upwards to be presented by the Head unto God, it hath come to pass that the earth endureth unto this day, and that judgment hath been withheld from the head of its most aggravated guilt. It appeareth, also, that in heaven they cease not from this intercessory office, but not, as the Papists say, in themselves, but in their Head.

It may therefore be laid down as a great principle of doctrine, that as the law of Christian life is love, so the law of Christian life, when love is rejected and maltreated, is forbearance, forgiveness, blessing, and intercession with God. As the office of the Christian church on earth is to preach, and to minister the grace of God unto all men, so also is it her office to make continual intercession before God for those who reject his offered grace, and trample under foot the blood of his covenant. And, of these two functions, the ministry of free grace, and the ministry of intercession for free grace rejected, if I were asked which is the more important, I would answer they are equally important to the integrity of love and the demonstration of Divine grace; but of the two, that which is the higher and nobler exercise of love, is surely intercession for him who hath spurned our love. And what shall we say then, if the church, forgetful of Christ's office of Intercessor, and of her own high vocation, to continue the same in the midst of an offending world, should take upon herself the office of accuser, and retaliate the injuries

which she receiveth, instead of meekly bearing, and being ever willing to forgive them? What, if the church should forget, even among themselves, the offices of mutual forbearance and forgiveness, and rage towards one another with even more bitterness and cruelty than those who care for none of these things? What, if the writings the most religious should be also the most vindictive, and the society the most religious should be the society most full of judgment and of accusation? Then, were it not a proof that God's ordinances were changed, that his light was hidden under a bushel, that the salt had lost its savour, and that the name of God was blasphemed amongst the heathen because of his people, and that the last times were come, and that destruction was about to begin at his own house.

Now this is the charge which I make, as a minister of truth, for the warning of you, my brethren, that ye may know your sinfulness, and return unto the Lord with all your hearts; and forasmuch as a public charge should on public grounds be established, and he that maketh it should, according to the Athenian law, make it with a halter around his own neck; forasmuch, also, as it were better for me, that a millstone should be tied around my neck, and myself cast into the depths of the sea, than offend any of these little ones; I do propose, with all carefulness and gravity of spirit, to shew out this matter under the four following heads:—1st, The total alteration which hath

taken place within these thirty years in the spirit of our Christian society. 2dly, That character of our religious periodical writings. 3dly, The spirit of judgment, which is become the soul of religious communities. And lastly, Such other evidences as cannot be gathered under the three foregoing heads.

The thing which I propose first, in evidence that the spirit of the church, from being a spirit of intercession, hath become a spirit of accusation, is derived from the change which I observe in the spirit of society, which in a Christian land will always be found to indicate the spirit that is in the church. But truly, as I have oft said, I allow not any difference between society and the church; every baptized person being to me a member of the church, and all his actions under the cognizance of the church. Now, of all the changes which I remark as having made rapid progress in my own time, this is the most remarkable; that there is no longer any veil of charity cast over things, but every one of the faults of men is diligently brought under the public eye; and this not of public men merely, but of private men also, of families, of friendships, of the most confidential communications. Every thing that will bear a censure hath its meed of censure, and commonly much more than its meed: accusation is added to accusation, till there is no end of it. Personalities of every kind, opprobriums of every kind, falsehoods of every kind, are heaped upon the

most private and inoffensive men. The more dignified the person is, the more is it considered a duty to gird at him with suspicion and slander. The more holy the office, the more unholy and unbridled is the calumny. Go not to justify yourselves, brethren, by saying, These are the doings of a few; this spirit of accusation is universal. We delight in it. The writings which are the fullest of it are the most acceptable to us, the most widely circulated amongst us. It is the spirit of accusation which has gone abroad. Every year seems to grow more pregnant of these accusations than the year preceding. It possesseth all places, from the senate and the pulpit down to the mechanics' club.—Now, some will say, it hath always been so. I deny that it hath always been any thing like what we have seen within the last thirty years. Formerly it was considered as a great crime to invade the charities of friendship and acquaintance; it was thought a duty to bear with our mutual infirmities, and to intercede for our mutual faults; and before sitting down at the Lord's table, every man who retained a grudge at another was importunately required to seek, and by all means obtain, reconciliation, before bringing his gift to the altar. Nay, the principle is embodied in our very laws; which require two parties, before they join issue in a suit, to confer with one another privately for the making of it up; and there is in every suit a stage of this kind, of which advantage may be

taken, and I believe is sometimes taken, and is always expected to be taken, according to the constitution of our courts of law. But the most striking instance of this grace is our law of libel, so much spoken against, because the spirit on which it proceeds is so much died away; I mean the principle, as it is commonly expressed, The more truth, the more libel;—it being understood, that in a Christian community, those who best do know the infirmities of another ought to be the foremost to intercede with him, and for him; and never, save to preserve him from injuring another, make it known to the whole world: to proceed according to our Lord's rule of telling it to himself, if it offendeth us, then in the presence of another, and then to the rulers of the church. But this great principle of Christian polity is now slandered and laughed at, and argued against on all hands. We are more like people living under the Inquisition, or under the Venetian Council of Ten, than under the Protestant institutions of our fathers. Do you speak a word to your friend in family confidence, you shall chance to see it circulated over Britain in the next monthly publication. Do we, as the elders of a church, write a letter to any of you, in the fulfilment of our office, it may chance before a week pass to be made the sport of a magistrate on the bench, and by his means issued to the whole world. This is what they call the tribunal of public opinion, the spirit of the age, before which every thing must

bow. I, for one, disallow the powers of the tribunal to take cognisance of me; and I do not hesitate publicly to denounce this, the spirit of the age, as the anti-Christian spirit of accusation, the diabolical spirit in the text. It is not the truth or falsehood of the accusation, but the malice of the accusation, which is its anti-Christian feature. It is taking upon us the devil's office. There is no accuser-general in any Christian state, nor in any Christian church. It is not an office which Christianity acknowledges. It doth permit, yea, it doth require, that when any offence is done against the laws or office-bearers of Christ, those offences should be taken cognisance of, and for this purpose public officers are appointed. But when such a charge is brought, what fairness of procedure, what advantages are yielded to the inculpated person, what power of challenging those by whom he is to be tried! Into which things I cannot enter particularly, as it belongeth not so much to my province. But in this ostracism of the people, called Public Opinion, your accuser is unknown. He hath the charge of his own fabricating, and the irresponsible multitude are the judges. If I were to characterize our literature, I would say, it is the art of being the most personal and malicious, so as to escape the lash of the law. Truly, brethren, you cannot refuse me my conclusion, that it is an age of accusation. Look for intercessors, and you find none. And why not? First, because few of them exist;

and next, because their intercessions would not be read. Garbage is what the public loves to feed on, what it will pay a man to serve it withal. But enough of this; for men will not bear much to be said against their god.

Only one thing further I will say, in order to disabuse your minds from an error, which Satan diligently propagates, concerning the use and excellence of this new method of intending the common weal. He says, But what good effects have resulted from it! See how petty abuses, in every quarter of the country, and in every department of its concerns, have been remedied. Oh! there is nothing like light for destroying these fungous and foul growths, which take root in hidden places; and I add, *that* light is the light of God's word, held forth by the ordinance of preaching, and carried into effect by the righteous institutions and the wholesome discipline of the Christian church; of which preaching, discipline, yea, and law also, I have shewn that accusation is no part. Yet I allow that this revolution in the principle of conducting all things, this publicity given to matters which the racks of the Inquisition would not have torn from our trusty fathers, hath removed certain unsightly things, which had been permitted, in the privacy and confidence of our former Christian society, to introduce themselves. But by what a sacrifice have you gained this little advantage! you have gained it by destroying, almost entirely, the confidence of life. The like

reformation do you often find in the intercourse of two friends who are drawing fast to a quarrel: liberties which were indulged, omissions which were permitted, in the bosom of confidence, begin to be regulated by jealous nicety, so soon as the risk of the public eye comes to be apprehended. But would you therefore say, that this state of jealousy, of fear and trembling, because it observeth a better balance of reciprocal duties, is more wholesome than that unsuspecting love and friendship, large liberty, and bountiful grace, which formerly reigned between them? Even so, I allow that your public officers and functionaries have become more fearful of their actings, and more nice in their words, since this Cerberus watch-dog was put upon them; but is this the dignity of a minister of the church of Christ, or a functionary of a Christian state, that he should act under the eye and censure of man? that he should be responsible to this day's judgment for yesterday's actings; and when he ought to be thinking of eternal righteousness and immortal responsibility, should be thinking of to-morrow's passing opinion? Ah! and what a people hath it made! what an accusing, censorious people; what a feverish, unstable people! and what a soil to sow eternal verities in! It is as if you should employ the people who dwell upon all the coasts of Britain, diligently to employ every hand, and every implement, to bring the sand from the sea-shore, and scatter it, and mingle it up with our fruitful soils, because they

produce weeds, and then say, But we have effectually done for the weeds at last ! Before you boast, good countryman, wait until the next spring. It is as if a man, perceiving some diseased growth on a part of his fruit-trees which he could not reach, should root them up. But grant some visible improvements have been reaped in this quarter, what have you in return for the loss of domestic affection, and of confidence between man and man, which have been broken up, under the false pretences of the freedom of the public press, and the infallibility of public opinion ; — two causes which have done more, by this spirit of accusation, to cow the hearts, lower the noble temper, and scourge the excellent soil of these islanders, than all the cunning of the Papacy and all the might of the combined world ? God be praised, I am of a rougher rind than to be much hurt by such warfare ; and I trust the fear of God hath delivered me from such fears : but how many better and worthier men, who have faculties and gifts to help a sinking state, are hindered from exposing their over-delicate modesty, and you prevented from their excellent services, by the rough and stormy days which a thousand envious tongues have made in these last times ! — But I must not insist on a topic which is so painful ; and time doth not permit me to open the other proofs which I had to bring. I rather prefer to add a few words of instruction to my flock, how they may be preserved from this pestilence, which lives in the

very air, yea, and I may say forms the very life (for fever, and phrensy, and madness, are still life) of this generation of men.

My counsel to you, dear brethren, that you may be preserved from this most anti-Christian spirit, is, first, that you do most diligently set yourselves to cultivate that eucharistical, or thankful, or gracious spirit, which was exhibited in Jesus Christ, our great Example; and is wrought in all his members by the Holy Spirit. As ye have been forgiven, so do ye forgive: as ye have been borne with, so do ye bear with others. As Christ was once a Peace-maker, and is now an Intercessor for those who have rejected peace, so be ye peace-makers, and intercessors: and as he hath long forborne to come in judgment, so also bear long; remembering his words: "Judge not, that ye be not judged; for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Remember that Christ himself said, "I judge no man; I am not come to judge the world, but to save it." The time for judgment is not yet arrived. It is to mingle the ages which Christ hath constituted diverse, to introduce judgment into this the day of grace; and when judgment shall come, then shall such as have now suffered and forborne for Christ's sake, come along with him to judge the quick and the dead. Christ said, "I accuse ye not: ye have one that accuseth you, even Moses;" and yet Moses, in his proper

person, was one of the meekest of men, and most full of intercession : so be ye meek, so be ye full of intercession ; and it will come to pass that ye shall be God's witnesses in the midst of a wicked and perverse generation. But if any quarrel or ground of offence shall arise, which interrupteth the love of brethren, and threateneth the peace of the church, then follow the canon of the Lord : "Tell it to thy brother between thyself and him alone ; and if he hear thee, then hast thou gained thy brother : but if he refuse to hear thee, take with thee another, that in the mouth of two witnesses every thing may be confirmed : and if he still refuse, tell it to the church ; and if he refuse to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." In all this process, thou hast not accused him ; thou hast only sought reconciliation according to the precept of the Lord. And even now, when he hath rejected thee, thou still accusest him not, but rather dost intercede for him with God, and, when he sheweth any sign of penitence, with the church also, and the church intercedeth for him ; and, as I said, there is no accuser in the whole process. Thus do, dear brethren, and ye shall do well.

Secondly, I exhort you to guard against the continuance of wrath in your mind. "Be angry and sin not ; let not the sun go down upon your wrath ;" for this, according to the Apostle's account, is to lie open to the snare of the devil. Therefore, guard against all moods

of discontent one with another. Be of a single heart one towards another; hunger and thirst for peace; seek peace, and earnestly ensue it; dwell with one another in the bonds of love. This is what will cast the accuser out, who was cast out of heaven by the blood of Christ, and the word of the testimony of the martyrs who loved not their lives unto the death. So let your consciences be sprinkled from all evil works by the blood of Christ, and maintain the word of truth in your lips; and fear not man, who killeth the body.

Finally, As the character of the devil, or the accuser, consisteth both of murder and of falsehood, so be ye as tenacious of truth as ye are studious of love. Speak the truth one to another, in the love of it; and then shall you have little ear for slander of any kind. Guard against pride, for that openeth the door to the evil report of a brother. Desire also the good report of those that are without, for it is a great consolation of life; but, oh! be much more intent upon the answer of a good conscience, and the approbation of God. Even the heathens could say, that they reckoned an accuser to be worse than a thief: and what then should Christians say, and what feel, towards the system of evil speaking and endless accusations which ruleth the times, and riots in its rule? Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them; put away from your houses the works which indulge in them.

When your eye meeteth them, in perusing what for the business and duties of life it is necessary to peruse, let not your eye delight in them; nor your tongue repeat them. Yea, repeat them not, though it were to blame them, but consign them with shame and with pity to oblivion, and pray God to have mercy upon the land which harbours such envious and wicked people.

SERMON X.

INCONTINENT.

2 TIM. iii. 1, 3.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be incontinent.

THE word *incontinent*, as it is now commonly used, hath a much narrower import than the word in the original; which I shall endeavour to define to you, according to its grammatical import and classical use: for it is not found any where in the New Testament save in the passage before us; so that we cannot proceed by referring to other passages, but must be content with an exact definition of the proper power and signification of the word. It consists of two parts; *not*, and *governed*; being the negation of strength (properly of body), or power of any kind—as Heb. xi. 14, “He who had the power of death;”—and, in general, the positive part of the word is used in such expressions as these: To have the *power* to hold the *government*, to exercise the *command* of any thing—as in the ascriptions unto God: “To whom be honour and power

everlasting," 1 Tim. vi. 15; "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and *power*," Rev. v. 13. Strength, power, and government, may therefore be regarded as the quality which men in the latter times are said to be without: as we would express it, ungoverned, powerless, unrestrained, or weak, hasty, and destitute of self-command. This is the common use of the word in classical authors, to signify one who hath no power over himself; and it is found applied to the various passions of the mind as well as of the body, as, unrestrained in wrath, unrestrained in gain, unrestrained in glory. I do not say but that it is also found used of the lower passions, in the sense of the English word by which it is translated; but am very much inclined to believe that it is not this special sense, but the general one of intemperance, as applied to the whole man, both body and soul, which is here intended. And to this persuasion I am drawn, not only by the grammatical composition of the word, but also by the connexion it stands in; which, if you examine, you will find to relate, not to sensual characteristics, but to dissoluteness of the affections and passions of the mind. The connexion is, "without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent" (or, as we have expressed it, unrestrained), "fierce" (or un-meeke), "despisers of those that are good." Now these all relate to the evil passions and affections of the mind, and will not admit of being limited to mere sensual indulgence. They tell of a

state of society, full not so much of low, brutal intemperance, as of high mental excitement; under no guidance of reason or of religion; but under the impulse of feverish passion, hasty, headlong temper, and engrossing selfishness. Not the savage brutality of an uncivilized, uncultivated people; but the unprincipled and unrestrained energy of a highly intellectual and cultivated people. In one word, not the bondage of superstition, or of oppression; but the outbreakings and impetuosities of infidelity and liberty. And being so, that this is the type and character of the times described, and that in the midst of such mental pravities this feature of man contained in the text occurreth, we have no hesitation in taking the word *incontinent* in its old English sense, of unbridled, unrestrained, hasty, and immediate, rather than in the more modern sense of unchaste; the greater including the lesser, but the lesser not rising into the magnitude of the greater. Be it so, then, that the features of character in our text is unbridled, ungoverned, or unrestrained.

We proceed, in the First place, to open the ground of that Christian grace, or virtue, which is here denied unto the men of the last times; in the Second place, to open the nature and causes of the vice which is here ascribed to them; and, Thirdly, to shew, that in the Christian church this wicked character hath been increasing of late to a most alarming extent,

and at present stands out as a most ominous feature of the times.

We are therefore, in the First place, to discourse of the restraint and self-government, which is so essential to every Christian man, and worketh in him that patience, and meekness, and self-possession, which is the opposite of the impotency, incontinence, and impetuosity mentioned in the text. It is a high and noble theme, which carries us at once into the midst of Christian doctrine, and leadeth us to converse concerning the great mysteries of our being : for it involveth that great question of the controversy and warfare, which never ceaseth, and never shall cease, on this side the grave, between the flesh and the spirit, between nature and grace. The nature of man is in itself exceedingly rash, impetuous, and ungovernable ; as you may see by observing the character of the untamed tribes, who wander in the desolate places of the earth ; who are incapable of any restraint when their passion is kindled, but will destroy their enemy outright, devour his flesh, and drink his blood. Look back also into the heroic ages of the civilized world : what rapes, what rapine, what hideous destruction ! And behold by what acts and labours of generous valour against those unprincipled and headstrong savages, your Hercules, and your Theseus, and your Ulysses also, attained the honour of being ranked amongst the gods. Observe next,

to what a high and solemn state amongst the fathers of mankind, Solon, and Lycurgus, and Minos, and other sages, have attained, who devoted themselves to the second stage of bridling the violence of men, which is to give them laws. This, as Lord Bacon well observes, is the mystery of Orpheus's lyre, whose melodious and harmonious sounds stilled the particular instinct of each tribe of the wild beasts of prey, and held them in assembled concord and gentle society with one another. Orpheus, who was deemed worthy to descend into the lower parts of the earth, to bring back his wife from the place of separate spirits—fit emblem of the great truth, of Jesus our Lawgiver descending into the earth, to destroy him that had the power of death, and deliver his betrothed wife, his church, from the grave.

And thus may we observe, in general, do the works and labours of civilization proceed, by bridling the various passions of anger, malice, and revenge, and obliging all to conform themselves according to the righteous government of law and justice; and, if possible, to ascend into the region of grace, and mercy, and benevolence. It is not self-interest, as fools in these times idly talk, which binds and unites society, but it is the obliging of self-interest to submit itself to the common weal; whereof the fruit, no doubt, is greater health and wealth to each several member thereof. Thus doth man, by laws and constitutions of government, and still more by

the good customs and ordinances of civil life, endeavour what he can to prevent those hasty and evil tendencies of his nature from breaking out into instant gratification. This, which man, by natural reason, is ever doing his endeavour to accomplish in nations and societies, God, by revelation, doth accomplish in his church, in such a way as becometh the perfections of his own being, and the perfectness of every work to which he addresseth himself. He first gave a Law which admitted no latitude of sin, however small, but condemned the least evil as the greatest; and, like the laws of Draco, may be truly said to be written in blood; and that, too, for the reason which Draco assigned,—that for the least offence he could find no less penalty than death, and he had no greater for the greatest. For it is written concerning the law of God, “He that keepeth the whole law, and offendeth in one point, is guilty of all;” and it is still further written, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” This exactitude of justice, this perfection of holiness, and portrait of perfect goodness, which is in the Law, was written by God to shew men how far they had departed from the intention of God in man’s creation, and how totally unable they were for the Divine work of self-government; in order that, when the blameless, guileless, Holy One of God should come, he might be known from the rest of mankind, as a Divine no less than a human person; and in order that the children whom he should

beget by the Holy Ghost, even the church, might be known from the unregenerate world by the righteousness of the law, which is fulfilled in them that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; and in order that the nature of grace, and the necessity of it, might be shewn forth, in saving men from the guilt of the law; and, finally, in order that, in the age to come, the whole world might be constituted and governed under Christ, and under his raised saints, by that law, of which they had borne the severity, and through grace, by faith, escaped the penalty.

It is manifest, therefore, both from reason and from revelation, that there is a law in man's members warring against the law of his mind, and leading him into captivity to the law of sin which is in his members. It is further manifest, that to restrain themselves in some degree is the great work and labour of man, and the very condition of his well-being upon the earth. And it is still further manifest, that to restrain the evil which is in man no one ever prevailed, but the Son of God in our nature, through the fulness of the Holy Ghost. For I hold, and will ever maintain, the most orthodox and wholesome doctrine, that Christ was truly and verily of the nature of the fallen, and not of the un-fallen man. And with the church, which in full council declared it to be a heresy, I do declare it to be a heresy, that Christ had only one will: otherwise, what meaneth he, when he saith, "Not my will, but thine be done?" And if

he had two wills—one which he calleth his own, and one which he calleth his Father's—what were these, but the will which was in the human nature, and the will which was in the Divine nature, diverse the one from the other, as he himself declareth? And herein lay the work of Christ, that he never did the will of our nature, notwithstanding all that tempted it and solicited it from the flesh and from the world and from the devil, but the will of our Father which is in heaven. And so he kept the Law, and made it honourable, and shewed that God was a good law-giver, and that the Holy Spirit in fallen humanity was able to keep the law. The like controversy doth Christ propagate in all his members, to whom he imparteth the Holy Ghost; who, proceeding upon, and entering into, the substance of a fallen man, doth beget in him the child of God; doth reveal in him a Son of God; doth quicken in him the new man, created, after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness. By which regeneration and in-dwelling of the Holy Ghost there ariseth a new will, and a new law, which is the will of God, and the law of holiness, fulfilled in the life of Christ; and from henceforth the reason, which ever laboureth at self-government, is so mightily strengthened and possessed, that, no longer contenting itself with the laws of states, the rules of honour, and the maxims of the wisest men, it setteth sail to a nobler course, and steereth its majestic way according to the

laws and ordinances of God. And then beginneth the true warfare upon the inclinations of nature; and then beginneth the true work of self-restraint and self-sanctification, when we are made partakers of the Divine nature, in the person of the Holy Ghost. And just in proportion to the anointing which the church hath received of this Spirit from on high, will be the gentleness and meekness and patience of her suffering under the cruelties of the world; in which the first Christians as far surpassed the Reformers, as the Reformers surpass us. And just in proportion as the church hath received of this Holy Spirit will be her redemption from all violent passions of the mind; such as disobedience to authority, inclination to quarrel, envying of one another, railing against one another;—from all intemperate and inordinate love of the world; such as the ambition of place and preferment, the desire of riches, the vanity of dress and shew;—and likewise from all intemperate and incontinent lusts of the flesh; such as feasting, chambering, drunkenness, wantonness, and the like. And, on the other hand, according as these, the passions of the mind, the gratifications of the world, and the lusts of the flesh, get a head in the church, and prevail over holy discipline, and assimilate the church unto the world, so we do rightly conclude that the Holy Ghost is more and more departing from the church, and that she is drawing more and more near to an apostasy. But that this, the theology of the subject

before us, may be more clearly understood by each one of you, I request your attention to two passages of Scripture, which open this doctrine most beautifully.

The first, in the viith of the Romans, at the 14th verse, where the Apostle thus speaketh concerning the law of the Spirit, and concerning himself: "For we know that the law is spiritual"—that is to say, is of the Holy Spirit dwelling in man, and not in man as he is in himself—"but I am carnal, sold under sin: for that which I do I allow not"—that is, the will of man is under a bondage, which it feels, and from which it suffers, and against which it makes some debate by means of law and government: which contradiction in man the Apostle thus expresseth; "For what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." Then he proceedeth to shew how the reason of man doth justify God's holy law; according as in another place he saith, "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which shew the work of the law written in their hearts; their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." This same contrariety between the law of the flesh and the law of the mind, between the spirit of the will and the bondage of nature under which it is fallen, he thus expresseth in the passage before us, ver. 16: "If, then, I do that which I would not, I consent

unto the law that it is good: now, then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not: for the good that I would I do not, but the evil that I would not that I do. Now, if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find, then, a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me: for I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I feel another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law that is in my members. Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death! I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So, then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."—In this most sublime, and at the same time most philosophical, view of human nature, is fully stated out, and freely confessed, the great mystery of the fallen estate of the creature man: not a devil, not an angel of God, but a being more complete and more mysterious than both; who hath in him of the holy will of the one, and of the diabolical lust of the other. Which creature was the proper theatre for the great warfare between light and darkness, between life and death; there being in him a footing for both powers to stand upon, and a field for them to wage their warfare fully out. Which warfare

is carried on by the Holy Ghost dwelling in the inward man, and warring against sin, dwelling in, and possessing, the visible and outward man. Which warfare is thus described in the other part of Scripture to which I would refer, Gal. v. 17—24: "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts." And if this be the warfare, then the victory is the restraining, and governing, and sanctifying to the obedience of God's law, of those works and desires of the flesh which constitute the footing that Satan hath obtained by the fall, and still holdeth over the immortal spirit of man. So that you perceive it to be, as I said, that this head of discourse—to wit, the nature of Christian restraint—doth involve the largest field

of Christian doctrine—to wit, the bondage of the will under the law of the flesh, and its redemption from the same; and not only so, but the subjugation of the flesh also, and the restraining of the devils which have possessed it, and the obliging of it to obey the law of God; the binding of recusant and rebellious nature to the horns of the altar; and the offering it thereon, to the glory of Christ, who died for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

We come now, in the Second place, to discourse of the falling away of this self-government and restraint, whereof we have stated the cause; and, as we proceed along the course of this painful part of our subject, to open unto you likewise the signs of the decline of this Christian grace, and the symptoms of its speedy dissolution altogether. Now, to handle this subject as a divine, and not as a moralist; as a Christian minister, and not as a profane satirist; I observe the first sign to consist in the short-coming of doctrine which is held upon the subject of the Holy Spirit and his work, to whom it pertaineth to produce in the Christian this self-command. Instead of standing bluntly and stoutly up to the true doctrine of the church, concerning the indestructible wickedness of the old man, and the ineradicable corruption of human nature, even in the holiest saint, have they not taken up with the adulterous forms of the Arminian

heresy,—that the old man undergoeth a change of disposition, and ceaseth to be that perverse and obstinate enemy of God which he was from the beginning? And so will they prattle and talk about such passages as we have now quoted from St. Paul, as if they applied only to his estate as a natural man—to which indeed they do apply—but did not apply to his estate as a spiritual man, to which they apply not less than to the former. And what is the consequence, when you believe your deadly enemy to have become your ally, or even your friend? Is it not, that he ever stealeth marches upon your easy confidence, and supplanteth you out of all your rightful possessions? But and if you had known that that enemy was a thief, you would have barred the door against him; and if you had known that he was a stout robber, you would have armed the house against him, and stood to your tackle all the night. But have not they got the notion, that the natural man comes into terms, and is content to be a subject; whereas the rebel doth but grind at his chains perpetually? And so also have they doted, that the world, with its literature and its power and its wealth, either is become, or is straightway about to become, the ally of the church; and that Satan is not so bad as he is called, neither playeth such a stroke in human wickedness as ministers oftentimes allege. And this they say with a smile, as if it were a good joke; yea, and I have heard it

from the mouths of the gravest men. And what can you expect of such shallow and false views of the enemy's disposition and force, but that the militant soul, and the militant church, should forget their military order, their soldier-like discipline, and their warlike spirit; and at length, ceasing to entreat, and ceasing to expect, the help of the Holy Spirit as a champion and guide of war, and looking for him only as the bearer of a flag of truce, or the counsellor of a most adulterous league, they should come to lose him and his services altogether; who will not serve on any such commission of amity or amnesty, but taketh part with the church only that she may make war on Amalek for ever? And hence it cometh to pass, that low and insufficient doctrine concerning the Spirit's person and office, bringing with it, as ever must be, ineffectual faith and insufficient aid, doth help on the evil upon the other side; and the church, instead of exhibiting the meek and holy aspect of a tamed, pacific body, intent upon self-denial, world resistance, and devil conquest, and patient and persevering in the service of God in the midst of abounding wickedness, doth turn into a timid, pharisaical, puritan separatist; who striveth after an ineffectual obedience of laws which she hath not power to practise; an ineffectual opposition of a world which she knoweth not how to oppose. And we need not wonder, that at one time she should be full of the affectation and outward form

of separateness, while within her own fenced limits she yieldeth to the inclinations of the mind and the indulgence of the flesh, because she knoweth not the wickedness that is in them, neither hath sought nor obtained the Spirit, which is necessary successfully to wrestle against them.

The second way in which this unrestrained spirit shews itself, and the second criterion by which its estimate may be taken, is the degree of reverence which is paid unto the holy discipline of the church; which is an ordinance of Christ, for the end of restraining and repressing the outbreakings of personal inclination and violence, and reducing all to the obedience of the precepts of Christ. Doctrine teacheth how the work of self-government and restraint is to be carried on: discipline taketh observation that it is carried on amongst the members of Christ.

But, alas! when doctrine faileth, discipline faileth also; and, behold, it is utterly failed in these our times: so that men have no longer the overawing influence of the bishops and presbyters and deacons of the church to help them in the work of self-government. The persons of these office-bearers have lost the respect, and their office hath lost the command, which are necessary to make them effectual, as a restraining, repressing influence upon the minds of men: whereof the evil in the church is the same as would be felt in the state, if judges and magistrates were to cease from holding courts of law, and trying the delinquencies which are

committed against law. Of which removal of the public officers of justice from their place, the evil would not be felt merely by the delinquents, thereby encouraged in their wickedness, but by all men, who would have the wholesome and necessary pressure of law and justice removed away from their perverse inclinations, and be left at liberty to do their own will and speak their own words. It is not by the cases of violence which it notices, nor even by those which it prevents, that discipline or law produce their good effect; but by their affording a counterpoise to the unruly and turbulent dispositions of the mind, whereby they most materially serve the work of self-government, and prevent the outbreaking of incontinent passions and violent humours. It is not the fear only of the power, but it is the conscience of the power as an ordinance of God: it is the reverence of it, the looking up to it with an habitual sense of obedience, the thinking of it as a great blessing, and the speaking of its acts with all respect; which produceth the same feeling in the members of the church toward those appointed over them of the Lord, which children have unto a parent, or disciples unto a teacher. And as the authority of a good father cannot be dispensed with in the bringing-up of a family, or the authority of a teacher in the discipline of a school, or the authority of a judge in the well-ordering of society; so neither can the discipline of the church be

dispensed with in the self-government and holy obedience of the members of Christ. And as we are sure, that, when a father hath lost his authority, the children's minds will run wild; and as, when a schoolmaster hath lost his command, the school is one scene of uproar; and as, when the courts of justice have lost their sacredness, the state of the people soon becomes intolerable to themselves: so we may rest assured, that, when discipline hath ceased in the church, and regular courts for that end are held no more, and the priesthood are spoken against, and the eldership not held in holy reputation, it will surely be found that the people, being left to themselves, without the ordinance of God, will be found following their own inclinations, and breaking out into violations of the righteous and wise laws of the Gospel of Christ.

Next to the adulteration of the doctrine upon the subject of this great controversy with ourselves, and the total suppression of discipline, we have to observe, as the third proof, and cause also of the evil in the text, that liberty of speech in which men have of late permitted themselves to indulge. "Our tongue is our own: who is Lord over us?" It is a notion, from which even good men are not delivered, that there is little or no evil in speculations and arguments concerning the most holy and venerable things; and that even censure, and continual fault-finding, are a wholesome check upon all things, ecclesiastical and civil. So that men do not by

any action, as they are pleased to say, do their neighbour any harm, they may be allowed to speak as they please. This I hold to be a most dangerous maxim, leading to all kinds of uncontrouled indulgences of the mind: for, as we set forth in the beginning of this discourse, men are naturally given to indulge their present inclinations, and follow out their violent passions; neither come under the restraints of reason and religion, of the state and the church, without the constant application of principles of self-controul and self-government. The great end of all institutions of the church and society, is to present men with such an idea of a citizen, a gentleman, a nobleman, a prince, a Christian, as, being continually before them, may gradually take hold of their conscience, desire, and pursuit. But if men are to be permitted in words to express their evil, crude, and wicked thoughts, then see you not how the common ear is poisoned, and the common heart deluded, with various forms of what is good and right and honourable in man to pursue? Every principle in the mind becomes loosened and relaxed a little. And if these attacks come on frequently and incessantly, those bulwarks which restrain the wickedness which is in every man become subverted; law ceaseth to be revered, and is but feared; religion ceaseth to be obeyed, and is but observed; the virtues and decencies of life cease to be regarded as eternal and immutable truths of God, and are

but looked upon as the temporary and expedient institutions of man. And what can be expected to come of this, but a gradual breaking-up of the bonds and obligations of peaceful and happy life; and, in the end, a thorough and complete disorganization of the church and the state?

From these three causes put together—to wit, the adulteration of doctrine concerning the incessant and unabating controversy which is to be maintained between the old and the new man; the relaxation, and I may say abolition, of all discipline in the church; and the unbridled licentiousness of the speech and the thought of man—it hath come to pass in these latter days, that every man feeleth on religion as if he were his own master, free to think and free to do what seemeth good in his own sight. The mutual obligation, the fervent charities, the tender delicacies, which brother oweth to brother, and which bindeth men over to a constant restraint and temperance in all things, hath ceased altogether, and given place to the maxims, ‘Man is not responsible to man for his belief,’ and ‘man is not responsible for his faith at all:’ that is to say, in matters of religion man is his own master; is an isolated being; is tenderly connected, is closely bound, to no other man. When religion becometh such a separative and dissocial thing, let it be banished from the face of the earth; for certes it will draw against and break asunder the cords of families and states.

Oh, is this the religion of Jesus, who said, "Woe to him by whom offences come! it were better for him that a millstone were tied around his neck, and that he were cast into the midst of the sea?" Is this the religion of Paul, who said, "Rather than offend my brother I would not eat meat while the world lasteth?" And do we wonder, that, in the midst of such irresponsibility, men should be unrestrained and unbridled? For what is there to prevent them being so? When the chains are broken off from his hands, and the prison walls and gates are broken down, is it wonderful that the felon should escape?

If now you turn to look how it is with the church, you shall find that on every hand there reigneth, and I may say rageth, the most unbridled indulgence of all the impetuous passions of the mind. Take them in order.—First, anger. Behold with what bitterness it expresseth in those works considered peculiarly religious; in which, I will say, there is observed less of decency and decorum than in those which shun religion altogether, and address themselves merely to the intellect, or affairs of state. Take, again, the speeches uttered in private by Christians against one another: what unbridled indulgence of anger; what free expression of indignation! Were it a generous anger against iniquity, or an enthusiastic devotedness to God's glory—such a zeal as filled the holy breast of Jesus when he cleansed the Lord's house of thieves and money-changers—I would

rejoice in it, instead of blaming it : but when I behold it associated with ignorance of one another, with misrepresentations of one another, with envy and with evil-speaking of one another, what can I say, but that a general spirit of *incontinence* is spread abroad? If, again, you look at the haste and speed with which men hurry on the course of any thing they have conceived, be it good or evil, you will see another token of the character in our text, which is the very opposite of faith, which trusteth and maketh no haste. If, again, you refer to the unreservedness of men's speeches—that is to say, their speaking all they feel, without any restraint, except that which proceedeth from selfish prudence—you will see another token of the same wicked spirit. When one points out these marks of a hasty and unruly spirit which existeth in the common appearances of society, men of a shallow observation point to the great improvement which hath taken place on the merely physical character of men, as, that they do not drink to intoxication, like our fathers. With regard to the common people, I doubt this very much ; and with respect to others, I believe that it has been brought about chiefly by the greater urgency of the cares and business of life not permitting that leisure for indulgence which formerly prevailed. But in respect to eating, I believe there is much more intemperance, both as to quantity, and especially as to quality, than there was amongst our

fathers. Now, I observe, that as drinking to excess is the character of a savage and uncivilized people; so eating with nicety, and to excess, is the character of a people who are passing into the other extreme of intellectual dissoluteness and over-refinement. But if I were to come to speak of unchasteness—from which I have forborne, lest I should offend modest and delicate minds—I believe in my heart that the cities of the North and the South of this island were never so deluged with the sin of fornication and adultery as they are at this present time. And with respect to other crimes, of a still deeper dye, I need not say with what difficulty the incontinent disposition to them are kept in check by the terrors of law. But these are subjects to be left rather to the reflection of every man's mind, than exposed in the open day-light of preaching. Enough, however, hath been said to establish the matter of fact involved in the subject of discourse, that these times are times in which men are unrestrained, ungoverned, and incontinent.

But the proof, above all others, of the sensual incontinence of these times—seeing it is not convenient for modesty's sake to enter into particulars—is the exceeding thirst after gain, which can do no more than nourish sensual gratifications. For money is the representative of things visible, whose pleasantness consists only in their gratifications to the sense: if therefore, as all

allow, the desire of riches, the passion and haste to be rich, has in these times become immoderate and unrestrained—so that men will make themselves slaves under all risks, sacrifice all principle to the one passion of obtaining wealth; which, when got, can only possess things visible, and indulge the sense in some way or other—then I conclude, without passing to particulars, that unrestrainedness in sensual enjoyments is as much the character of the times, as unrestrainedness in respect to opinions of the intellect, and tempers of the mind, and affections of the heart: and, in short, that from the highest to the lowest faculty of man, and through all the departments of society, there is that unrestrained and incontinent character which the text declareth is to prevail in the last times

I am not going to search into the secrets of religious communities, to expose the indulgence of envy and malice and all misrule, the indulgence of eating and drinking, and the vanity of dress, and other unrestrained dispositions, which reign there as in the outward world: nor am I to lay open the character of the religious world, as it is exhibited in open day, in the violence of their mutual recrimination, the greedy hunger and thirst of popular applause, and the unrestrained ambition of great patronage and wealth which reigns on every hand. These things I have no pleasure to hear of, and

still less to speak of; but, without any such laying bare of grievous sores on the body of Christ, I know that where the Spirit of God is not looked upon as the antagonist of the spirit of fallen nature, and the church as the antagonist of the world, there never will be, in the individual members or the collective body of the church, that holy restraint of the natural man, and harmless use of the world, which is the grace denied by our text to the church in the last times.

In conclusion, dearly beloved brethren, I pray you to give reverent heed both to the point of doctrine and to the matter of fact contained in this discourse. As to the former, guarding yourselves against thinking otherwise of the flesh and of the world than as inveterate enemies of God, which could not otherwise be overcome than by the incarnate God, and are not now to be bridled or held in check otherwise than by his Spirit dwelling in us, and uniting us to the all-powerful Head. His victory is our victory, his strength our strength, in which we shall overcome all his and our enemies. I exhort you to regard the devil as not otherwise to be driven from his posts in the flesh and in the world, than by the almighty power of Christ dwelling in us by the Holy Spirit: and that if we should for a moment give up our faith in the union which we have with Christ by the Spirit, that moment we lose our strength, and are liable to the breaking out of every evil

purpose and malicious affection, and incontinent fleshly desire, and shall never be meek, gentle, nor abiding in the fellowship and communion of the Holy Ghost.—With respect, next, to the matter of fact: I earnestly exhort and entreat you to live under the continual sense of your holy vocation as the members of a holy body, as the communicants with Christ, who should have a holy conversation with one another: not as independent of one another, or of the governments and helps which Christ hath appointed in his church; but as being under a continual and abiding authority of superiors, and living as the responsible members of a visible church, as well as the responsible members of an invisible and spiritual church. Moreover, have a rein upon your thoughts and upon your words, and go not to think that the only evil is in a visible action. For if you suffer your thoughts to be ungoverned by charity, and your words to be ungoverned by wisdom, your actions also shall soon become licentious. And, finally, keep yourselves from all incontinence of the bodily desires and appetites; observing temperance and moderation in all things; and keeping yourselves pure and spotless in the midst of an evil and perverse generation, wherein you are placed as lights in the midst of darkness. Thus do, and you shall be blessed of God to be his faithful witnesses against the gluttony and drunkenness and worldliness which are to charac-

terize the times of his coming. He must have, he will have, some to bear him faithful witness in the last and perilous days. I trust he may be pleased, of his free and sovereign grace, to take some from the midst of us. In this we labour, and in this hope we rejoice, waiting diligently for the day of his appearing.

SERMON XI.

FIERCE.

2 TIM. iii. 1, 3.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be fierce.

THE word translated “fierce,” is in the original *unmeek*, or *untamed*; and the positive term, of which this is the negative, is applied by classical authors to animals which have been broken in from the wild and savage state, and rendered tame and serviceable to the purposes of man. It is also used of plants and fruits which men are wont to sow and cultivate, in contradistinction from those which are in a wild state; and from thence cometh to be used of men in whom the violent passions, tempers, and humours of nature have been softened down, and put under government, by the operation of laws, of manners, and of religion: which condition conferreth the first degree of rank in all countries, being exactly what is named in the word *gentleman*, and *gentlewoman*. In the New Testament, the word occurreth no where but in the place before

us; and therefore we do rightly take it up in its common and natural use. For the word *fierce*, therefore, we substitute, as the text of our discourse and the next characteristic of the last times, *unmeek*, *ungentle*. Into which quality of men we are now to examine, not as a moralist would, but as a preacher ought; seeing, of the fruits of the Spirit enumerated Gal. v. 22, two are gentleness and meekness; and our Lord, when commending his yoke unto men, said, "For I am meek and lowly." Let us, therefore, by the grace of God, First inquire into this feature of a Christian, how it is produced by the Holy Spirit; Secondly, endeavour to point out in what way it expresseth itself publicly and openly in the community of the church; and, Thirdly, by the absence of these outward signs, and the presence of their opposites, endeavour to convince this generation of the Christian church how unmeek they have become in these last times of the Gentile dispensation.

I need not, in treating of meekness, repeat what I set forth in my former discourse, concerning the perpetual opposition and controversy which there is between the nature of fallen man, and the Divine nature of the Holy Ghost, which we have given to us in our regeneration; but, proceeding from the point where we left off, I would go on to shew, how the Holy Spirit, in the regenerate, doth work out by degrees that meekness and gentleness which our Saviour was predicted by the Prophet Isaiah

to possess, in these words (xlii. 2): "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench." Which quality, also, he claimed to himself, when he said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly; and ye shall find rest unto your soul."

Now, in tracing out the operation of the Holy Ghost in softening and sweetening and pacifying the turbulent humours and tempers of nature, we shall be mainly served by following the derivation of the word, and considering in what way the fruits of the earth are ameliorated, and the wild beasts of the forest tamed by man. The first step towards the culture of the lower creatures, is to know their parts and their habitudes, and their manner of growth and production, and, in general, to comprehend the laws of their being, while they are yet found only in the wild wood, desert, or mountain. You must condescend to their estate, and give some time and study to observe their ways, before you can obtain any advantage, or make any use of them; and this requireth superior knowledge. Knowledge, therefore, is the beginning of power over the inferior creatures, and most necessary towards the mastery and improvement of their condition. The next step is a more delicate and nice one to take; which is, to comprehend what offices in the economy of human life they are capable of:

and this requireth great sagacity to discern, and great patience to apply, the means of their culture: insomuch that the men who first taught the secret of taming wild creatures, of ploughing the earth to sow therein the seeds gathered in their wild state, to prune and to graft trees, and otherwise to submit and subject the animal and vegetable world unto the dominion of man, were wont in ancient times to be reckoned amongst the greatest benefactors of mankind, and they were not unfrequently ranked amongst the gods. Now, this second step, of drawing the creature from its wilderness back to its garden estate, is accomplished by superior knowledge in man, combined with a more patient and better governed will. Knowledge of itself will not avail: gleams of sagacity and strokes of power will not bring the creature into subjection, as they brought it under bondage. There must be a constant, regular system of mingled severity and mingled kindness exercised for several generations, before any creature will lay down its own will, and take upon itself the impression of a higher will. Witness the yearly, monthly, daily care of the gardener and the husbandman, of the cow-herd and the shepherd, and of every other person who giveth himself to the occupation of cultivating the lower creatures, or keeping them in that culture whereunto they have attained.

In all which you have an exact emblem of the way which God hath taken, and by which

he succeedeth, in bringing the wild, rebellious nature of man under his own government, and maketh it serviceable to his own glory. First, he sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh; who might become acquainted with all its ungodly, unholy propensities, and who might engage and overcome the evil spirit which worketh in our flesh; that, after having been touched with the fellow-feeling of our infirmities, and been tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin, he might be perfected to become our Redeemer from the power of Satan; our High Priest, to atone and intercede for our sins; the Captain of our salvation; the great example of a man, such as we are, brought into complete obedience to the will of God; and the great dispenser and dealer-out of the Holy Ghost unto every wild and untamed man, according to our several wants and necessities. The incarnation of Christ bears to the great scheme of God in redeeming the world, that same part which the labours of the back-woodsman doth in the progress of cultivating an American forest; which the labours of the first tamers of animals and cullers of herbs bear in the progress of civilized society. In which image, as indeed in every correct and true one which the human mind can form for the representation of things divine, we are anticipated by the holy Prophets, who did announce the advent of Christ exactly as a poet or philosopher would announce the approach of civili-

zation unto a wild and wooded land, a rough and a hoary wilderness ; saying, " Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God : Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain shall be made low ; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." (Isaiah xl. 3, 4.)

The Son of God, having thus by his incarnation humbled himself to our estate, and attained unto the knowledge of our temptations, which is necessary to succour all them that are tempted ; having, also, given a perfect type and model of a meek and gentle man—that is, of one conformed to the good and gracious will of God—he was exalted by his Father to be the great Redeemer of the desolate wilderness ; to make it rejoice and blossom like the rose. Which office, ever since his resurrection, he hath been performing for all the elect of God ; and shall in due time perform, through them, for all the nations and kindreds of men ; yea, and for the lower animals, and for the travailing and groaning creation. This he doth at present unto the elect, whom the Father giveth unto him, by the gift of the Holy Spirit ; who bringeth with him the knowledge and sympathy of our nature, which Christ hath attained, and the good, unerring will of the gracious Father ; and, being in us a continual in-dwelling of the Father and of the Son, doth, by the mighty power of God, fill every pipe of the organ of human nature, and bring forth from it that harmony

and consent and well-ordered melody, which is properly entitled in man to the name of gentleness and meekness. For, as harmony consisteth with the loudest, strongest, mightiest tones of music; and as cultivation of plants consisteth with, and indeed standeth in, the most majestic stately forms, and most prolific fruit-bearing, of which they are capable; and as the taming of animals is followed by a great increase of strength and power of exertion, and enlargement of number, and size of stature, and fleetness of course, and whatever else belongeth to each several kind: so the gentleness and meekness of man, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, consisteth with the largest endowments of the mind, the most comprehensive purposes, the most energetic actions, the most patient sufferings: and, in short, the most varied and perfect form whereof human nature is capable, not only consisteth therewith, but standeth therein. For I affirm, that as there is no wisdom like the wisdom of Solomon; and no deeds of war like those of Joshua, David, and Jonathan; and no sufferings like those of Jeremiah and Paul, and the other Prophets and Apostles of God; and no songs of the rapturous or pathetic spirit, like the songs of Zion; and no eloquence so overwhelming as that of the Prophets; and no morals so divine as those of the Apostles; and, to concentrate all righteousness, all wisdom, all action, and all suffering, in one person, as there is no

example of the perfect man but in Jesus Christ the Lord, who in all things consented to his Father's will; even so I maintain, that according as men are operated upon, are brought into subjection, are submitted to the will of God, and made meek and gentle, by the Holy Ghost dwelling and prevailing within them, so are they only made the more strong and mighty for acting and for suffering, the more wise, the more powerful, the more masters of themselves, the more full of command over others.

Mildness and gentleness, concerning which we discourse, are not the attributes of feebleness: they are not to be confounded with cowardice and cunning; neither are they to be mistaken for short-sightedness, stupidity, and dulness; nor yet to be compared with facility of nature, and yielding of disposition, and pliability, and the like—for the which, in these days of expediency and prudence, they are oft mistaken—Nay, verily; but the meekness and gentleness of Christ doth consist with a firmness of purpose, a boldness and freeness of speech and manner, a stedfast contradiction of evil powers and authorities, and a constant opposition to temporizing expedients and prudential measures, such as was manifested by our Lord against the Pharisees and Sadducees, the rulers of the religious ascendant in his time: and it consisteth with the silent dignity and rebuke which he bestowed upon Herod and his men of war, who set him at nought;

and it likewise consisteth with the great unaided undertakings, the imprudent adventures, the uncivil speeches, the stern rebuke, the unyielding fortitude of the Apostles and the first Christians : and it doth consist, likewise, with that earnest, zealous controversy which Luther and Calvin and the first reformers maintained against the Papal superstitions ; and with the stern purpose to worship God according to the truth which animated our fathers, all of whom were so stout, resolute, and stubborn towards wicked men, for the very reason that towards God and the church of Christ they were all-meek, all-gentle, and all-submissive. It is not the smallness of the stream that makes its face smooth and its current gentle : nay, but the larger the body of water the greater is the placidity and gentleness of its course, over the same surface, and within the same banks. The river which brawled from pool to pool, and hurried along its current with a thousand misdirections of its course and disturbances of its surface, doth, when it is in full flood, flow with an evenness and a beauty between its banks, with a placidity of strength and a unity of might, which, while it is beautiful to behold, is terrible to withstand. Cast an impediment in its way, and with gentle power it carries it along. Even so the mildness and gentleness of a man brought under the dominion of the Holy Ghost doth gather all his scattered and opposing forces into one great and constant stream of

obedience towards God ; in which he flows along with an undisturbed majesty, and will not be opposed or diverted from his stedfast purpose, but seeketh his way steadily onwards towards the great ocean of blessed being, which is union with Christ, and, through Christ, union with God.

The true definition, then, of a mild and gentle man, as appeareth from the premises, is one who, of whatever stature and capacity he may be by creation, doth give himself wholly up to the will of God, and devote himself singly to his glory. He is one who is under a law always consistent with itself; and such a law is the will of God. Then are we governed by goodness, and grace, and constant truth; servants, obedient unto our Master, and ever at his call; children, governed by love and devotedness unto our Father, who is ever calm and unruffled; and we therefore, having our shadow under his wing, are also calm and unruffled: we are like brave and veteran soldiers, who are prepared to obey their all-wise and all-conquering commander, be it whatever he pleaseth. Such soldiers, such sailors, as compose our valiant forces, are never ruffled nor troubled by any orders or commands, but address themselves calmly and courageously to obey; and if at any time they signify any ebullition of feeling, it is their three cheers, to denote with what heartiness they obey him. Which remindeth me of old Latimer: when, worn out with age and service, and broken with the

cramps and damps of a prison, he hobbled onward towards the stake, and saw Ridley (for they had not the comfort of a common prison) some way a-head of him, he cried out with cheerfulness, "Go on, go on, master Ridley : I am making all haste after you ; if possible to be up with you, and to get before you." Even so the man who hath submitted himself unto God is gentle and meek, yea, and cheerful, in the midst of the hardest services to which he is called, because he hath made a surrender of his own will—or, to speak more correctly, because God by his mighty power hath made a conquest of his will. If you wish for instances of the like kind, behold how gentle and obedient is a loving wife, who, comprehending aright the marriage obligation, hath given up her personality and will when she gave up her name unto her husband. Even in these degenerate days, I have seen some few instances of wives wedded unto husbands who were hasty, violent, changeable, and moody, who yet would with a continual and unvaried placidity go about the house, doing and bearing all commands, yea, and ingeniously anticipating the humours of their husbands as they rose, to prevent them from agitating the husbands' peace. Again ; I have seen some, though exceedingly few, children, who had such a sense of obedience and subjection to their parents that they would forego the amusements and entertainments proper to their age, to attend

upon their parents, haply in sickness, or in infirmity; would resist their own inclinations, and withstand every solicitation of others, which might for a season, or for a permanency, remove them from the act and power of obeying and serving their parents. I have known a son sit night after night supporting his father's head upon his bosom, when it could rest no where else with equal composure. And in all such cases, of such wonderful efficacy is the power of love and obedience when united together, no irritableness of an afflicted body, nor weariness of bed-ridden age, could ever for a moment cause a sigh of unwillingness to obey, or unmeekness or ungentleness in obedience.

For the truth is, that all turbulence of disposition, violence of passion, and uncontroled haste of temper, cometh from this very thing, that we are under many masters, and not submitted unto One. The intemperance of appetite is vexed by the diseases which it engenders: the boisterousness of passion is fed by the quarrels which it occasions: ambition fights with friendship, and both oft fight with honour and truth: affection fighteth with interest, and interest oft contendeth with inclination: vanity fighteth with good fellowship, and jealousy with love: and thus it fareth to unrenewed nature to be all in a bustle, in a ferment, in a controversy, in a war. And as bustle maketh no speed, and fermentation wasteth strength, and controversy dissipateth

power, and war destroyeth life and substance ; so is the strength, business, peace, and prosperity of man broken all to pieces, according as he suffereth these divers masters to have a place and sway in the council-chamber of his heart, and a hand in the affairs of his life. But when a man, even a natural man, giveth into one dominant and masterful disposition, which subjugates all the rest, then is he to be observed and feared ; for straightway he becometh a mighty genius, a strong and indomitable spirit, a man for much good or much evil, according as God's purposes may need. And from such men, if they be intellectual, thoughts and words and written books flow, like a deluge ; and from such men, if they be given to action, enterprises and exploits and mighty deeds come forth, like waters from a fountain. For men, as they lie all scattered abroad under many masters, and following various courses, do resemble the heads and streamlets and brooks of a river, amongst which its waters, being divided, course fast along, serving little end of fertility, and helping in no work of industry. And the same waters, when gathered into the one stream and current of the river, flowing on placidly between its fertile and wooded banks, and doing all manner of service for the husbandman and the trader, doth resemble the same man when he hath been gathered together into the meek and gentle obedience of the one Spirit of God, which Christ bestoweth upon

him, for knowledge to enlighten him, for wisdom to counsel him, for righteousness to guide him, in all things, unto the glory of God and the fulfilment of all his gracious purposes for the good of men. Such I conceive to be the true account of meekness. A man whose will is given up wholly to the will of God, is a meek man; and only he can be meek.

We now come, in the Second place, to speak of the visible signs and tokens in a community, or church, of meek and gentle members, whose will has been submitted to the one will of God. And we observe, first, That harmony, and love, and peace amongst themselves, will prevail, because they are all under submission, under willing submission, to one great presiding will and law. I say not, that they will all have the same convictions, or the same opinions, or the same gifts, or the same offices; this will be according to the purpose of the Creator, and the disposal of the great Householder. But there will be in all, such a great reverence towards the mind and will of the Sovereign, and such a humble acknowledgment of their own infirmities; such a habitual self-restraint, and disposition to yield to truth and abstain from prejudice; that these diversities of gifts and offices will only bind their union, by shewing them how imperfectly they are appointed without one another. And if disputes should arise, the habitual meekness of every one, together with the ordinance of Christ for the settling of disagreements and

the removal of offences, will afford ample time and opportunity for mediation, cool reflection, and calm discussion, to ascertain from what quarter the offence hath arisen. In a society or church of such meek and subdued spirits, there will be few hasty words spoken, still fewer repeated, and none delighted in. There will be few hard speeches against one another; no malicious aspersions, no exaggerated statements. Zeal will not be wanting, but it will be zeal for truth; yea, it will be called for, and encouraged to come forth; for meek and gentle men are patient of the truth. The peace and harmony of which I speak will consist with great liberty of speech and of action; for meekness is very tolerant, and gentleness is very indulgent. There will be much speculation into things unknown, as well as much delight in things believed, concerning God and his works; much openness of ear, much desire to be instructed, much patience with the ignorant, much dealing with the perverse, and much entreaty with those that are out of the way. Ah, the critical judgment, the sharp tongue, the inquisitive eye, the supercilious brow, and the intolerant lip, belong not to the meek and gentle Christian, but to the proud and bigoted Pharisee. That is not peace which the Pharisee ever seeketh to produce, but conformity to his own superstitious and selfish conceits. Compare the conduct of our Lord towards his disciples with the conduct of the Pharisees towards him, if you would be convinced how

gentleness is attended with frank and easy confidence in one another, and how bigotry begets fear, suspicion, and jealousy of every kind. As the lamb is, being compared with the wolf, so is a gentle Christian compared with a Pharisaical bigot. Peace, indeed, and harmony, such as consisteth with the greatest possible diversity of individual character and office, is the fruit of a society of meek and gentle Christians.

I observe, secondly, That the result of such an association of men will be great wisdom. Meek-eyed wisdom is proverbial amongst men. "Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge among you?" says the Apostle, "let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom." When he describeth the wisdom which is from above, he saith, "It is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated; full of mercy and of good fruits; without partiality, and without hypocrisy:" of which eight characteristics of wisdom, four hold of meekness. And when distinguishing this from the wisdom that is not from above, he giveth these characters of the latter, that it consisteth in "envying and strife, with confusion, and every evil work." Well, therefore, may we say, that meekness is the lowly porch of the temple of Wisdom; lowly, that no towering passion, or inflated vanity, or big self-conceit, may enter thereat. What form took that Spirit of wisdom with which Christ was anointed? Was it not the form of a dove? the meekest, gentlest, yet

deetest, and most constant in its love, of all the fowls of heaven. And what emblem found the Prophets for Christ himself, our Wisdom, but the Lamb led to the slaughter; so meek and gentle that it licketh the hand that is about to slay it? And if we will reflect for a moment whence wisdom cometh, and how it proceedeth, we shall see how true are these symbols and sayings of God. As of physical science it may truly be said, that there is not a fact or a conclusion which doth not first come by the sense; so of wisdom it may be said, that there is not one of all its counsels, and conclusions, and principles, and proverbs, which hath not its origin in the responsible will. Wisdom is the oneness of the will, representing itself in the infinite forms of the reason. There is an act of inward consciousness, a reflection of the mind on itself, in every act of wisdom. Now if the will be under the law of the flesh, driving it hither and thither; if it be overclouded with sensual dispositions, and marred by gusts of passion; how shall it give back any reflections of truth, or be at any time fit for receiving impressions of truth from the Holy Spirit of God? The very first operation of faith is, to deliver the spirit from the power of sight—that is, to prevent the reason from being under the mastery of the sense: and when God hath made the spirit meek, he proceedeth to inform it with thoughts and purposes of wisdom. Assured, therefore, may we be, that the church,

composed of meek and gentle men, will be full of manifold wisdom ; some having wisdom to guide the inexperienced, some having wisdom to convict the gainsayers, some to manage affairs, some to interpret hard passages, some to set forth noble discourses of various truth, some to conciliate differences, some to detect hypocrisies, and so forth, throughout the boundless region of wisdom. The manifoldness, the variety, the luxuriant plenty, of thoughts, and feelings, and actions, and devices, all in Christ, and all for Christ, who is our Wisdom, will be a sure and constant attendant upon the church, whenever a meek and gentle spirit hath obtained the mastery. What deep meditations will there be of God and the human soul ! what openings of his purpose ! what foreshewings of his end ! how hope will soar into the quiet heavens, and sing aloud, like the lark after the rain hath purged the air ! What infinite contemplations, also, will arise upon the tranquil horizon of a meek and gentle spirit, which will never visit the fitful and feverish mind, tossed with passions, and visited with the cloudy shapes of fancy, but having no steady discernment of truth, nor certain knowledge of the ways and works of God ! A mind which hath the meekness of wisdom, is like a country all teeming and fragrant with the various productions of autumn : a mind under the impulses of passion and selfishness, is like a land which hath oft been visited with the whirlwind, and produceth nothing in any plentifulness or

variety, but only rough and hardy plants, to be a melancholy witness of what the land would have produced under more genial influences. I give this, therefore, as the second mark of the church in a meek and gentle state; and the third and last, which I have to produce, is, Great power and influence over the world without.

The peace with liberty, and the wisdom with manifold variety, which proceed from the meek and gentle spirits concerning which we discourse, do, in the end, give the church great power over the world; which is endeavouring, by its various arts, inventions, and laws, ranks, and offices of life, and ordinances of government, to produce that very same gentleness and docility and unity of nature, which Christ by the ministry of the Holy Ghost produceth in the church. For, as we have often taught, civilization and society are efforts of the natural man to bring about that peace, plenty, and prosperity, which Christ effecteth in the church by the ministry of the Holy Ghost. The church, therefore, when she prospereth, is like a garden in the midst of the desert world, whose envy, malice, and brute power delighteth to trample her under foot; but, continually repairing the waste, she doth at length tame the savage world, and by degrees shed around a most powerful influence upon all things that exist. Thus it was the church subdued Paganism, humanized power, abolished servitude, changed the forms of life, and at length

was worshipped instead of Christ. Thus, also, the church at the Reformation by degrees abolished all the inventions of the Papacy in this Protestant land; restored faith unto the Holy Scriptures, and abolished credulity in legends and other vanities; destroyed persecution for conscience sake; begat philosophy, poetry, equal laws, and pure morals; and wrought a thousand other works of power, which have no parallel in the history of any kingdom. Such power doth the church, through its meekness, peace, and wisdom, exercise over all the great springs of human activity, and bulwarks of human well-being.

Now, without going further into detail upon these three characteristics of the church when she is found flourishing in meekness, we proceed in the Last place, to try by these the present character of the church, in order to discover whether it be meek or unmeek.—And, first, is the church peaceable within itself? Let the greatest admirer of the time present answer me the question. First, there is the great division betwixt Dissenters and an Establishment, so bitter, that we look upon each other with jealousy, not to say hatred: as if the mere circumstance that the king and his court, and the members of the state, had preferred the one, were a sufficient reason why the other should dislike and hate her, or she exult over the other. If there was a spirit of meekness spread abroad, and according as it is spread abroad, this differ-

ence would be obliterated; and those who are placed in honour would rather be the objects of tender sympathy and earnest prayer, than of grudging and envy. I cannot look upon the bitterness with which these two parties in the church of Christ stand marshalled against each other, without the most fearful apprehension of the wrath of God; and I do most solemnly discharge you, dear brethren, though we should be tenfold more the objects of misrepresentation than we have been in times past, from repaying it with one bitter speech, with one revengeful feeling. Take it meekly: "pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you."—Again: if I look into either division of Christ's body, where there should be no division—for example, into our own church—where shall we find meekness, where shall we find gentleness, any where, in the two great parties which divide it? Nor is it better in these parts. And, oh! if you look for any liberty of thinking or expounding your thoughts, which belongeth to the confidence of peace, every man, from whom you differ in your manner or in your matter, considers himself personally offended, and you are straightway assailed anonymously in all their organs of opinion, as if you were a perverter of the truth and an enemy of all souls. To allege that there is any other way of handling the truth than that which each party patronizeth, is considered as a direct insult. I declare, that I could weep

when I think of the wrath, and envy, and evil speaking of which I myself have been the occasion. There is no point of heterodoxy, nor degree of blasphemy, no wanton cruelty of malignity, which they will not lay to your charge, if you follow out the office of preaching, according to the rules and ordinances of the church, with the liberty and latitude of a man whom the Spirit hath made free, and will not conform to the custom of the place and time. All these are the fruits of unmeekness; they come of fierceness; they belong to the Pharisee, and not to the Christian. I would to God it were otherwise! I desire to have no fellowship with such a spirit, which would almost lead one to say, "I am fallen amongst false brethren, amongst strange children, whose tongues are a sharp sword, and their right hand a right hand of violence." But no one will be bold enough to affirm that these are meek times, when tried by the peace which meekness should produce.

If, secondly, we try them by the manifold wisdom of which meekness is the parent, then what proof of wisdom is there in the church? what works like those produced by the Spirit of God in former times, whose magnitude is not such a contrast to the puny efforts of moderns, as is the solid substance of every paragraph and of every sentence? And what infinite variety, withal, in their works! what handling of controversy with the Papist, with the heretic,

with the schismatic, with the Deist ! what openings of the mystery of the former covenants ! what deep discoveries of the being and purpose of God in the face of Jesus Christ ! what rich discourse of the work of the Spirit ! what researches into the history of the church ! what prophetic anticipations ! Then, what personal meditations and exercises of soul, contemplations of God's works and ways, exhortations to the brethren, lessons to every rank ! Of these fruits of wisdom the shadow even no longer existeth : we are dwindled into a mere span ; we are children, and babes rule over us. You might within the compass of a page set down almost all the religious ideas out of which the periodical, yea, and what is thought the more substantial, divinity of the time is beaten out. I look for wisdom, but I can find none. And why ? because all is bustle, business, and excitement. Committee meetings, and public meetings, and journeys of various kinds, and newspaper reading, magazine reading, and the like, leave men neither time nor capacity for thought. But, above all, the disquiet, the unrest, the turbulence, in which our life is passed, hindereth wisdom : for the wisdom which is from above is peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy.

Now, as concerning that power which meekness, with its companions peace and wisdom, will always give to the church, over law, and government, and art, and science, and literature,

and the like attempts of nature to civilize mankind, and which heretofore was manifested in this land at the time of the Reformation, and over all the Roman empire by primitive Christianity; it hath utterly failed. That power which the meek or tamed church hath over the half-savage world, hath in our days entirely departed. We are no longer able to keep our own against the out-breaking violence of the natural man. Our history, our poetry, our politics, our science, our literature—every thing which distinguisheth a Christian people—is going from obeying the church, and Christ the Head of the church, to serve nature, and Satan the prince of nature. The very idea of ruling for God and Christ hath departed from our government, and hath, I think, departed also from the church. There is an untamed violence, a hot and passionate temper, an acrid calumnious way of speech, a cold contempt for principle, a mockery of holiness and of holy men, a scowling suspicion, which indicate the savage spirit of Satan, and the love of nature rather than the love of God. When our chief poets take for their theme the character of Cain; the loves of the angels, or of the sons of God with the daughters of men; when friend betrayeth friend in open day, and justifies the same; when men assault one another under the cover of secrecy, and delight in anonymous slander: when these things are the characteristics of a people, that people richly deserve the character of being unmeek; and when this hath come out of the

opposite condition of meekness, peace, wisdom, and power, that people have elected and preferred evil, and are well nigh unto destruction.

My discourse, dear brethren, you will perceive, hath been rather to define, distinguish, and commend the beauty of meekness, than to exhibit the deformity of fierceness; rather to open unto you, my people, the rewards which God bestoweth upon the meek disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus, than to convict others, and the church in general, of their grievous departure from this prevailing temper of Christ; because it would avail me little, as a shepherd, to convince you of the wolfish character of these times, unless I did also open unto you the loveliness of the Lamb of God, and the dove-like meekness of the Holy Ghost. I wish to bring no railing accusation against any one, but I wish to open to my people the perils in the midst of which they live. And I doubt not to say, that the vineyard of the Lord is trodden down: "All they which pass by the way do pluck her; the boar out of the forest doth waste her, and the wild beast out of the wood doth devour her." I hesitate not to say unto you, "Beware of false prophets, which come unto you in sheep's clothing, for inwardly they are ravening wolves." And I give you the mark of the Lord to distinguish them; "Ye shall know them by their fruits: Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" Those are not prophets of the Lord who calumniate one another. Those are

not members of the Lord who tear one another to pieces. What saith the Apostle James? "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing? My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth the fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can a fig-tree bear olive-berries? either a vine figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh." Now, brethren, these things which I have spoken are true. I know them to be true words, even though I myself may not have profited therein as I ought. Believe me, that gentleness and meekness are the only inlets to peace, to wisdom, prudence, expediency, and to power. Be, therefore, meek. Eagerly ensue it; rest not until ye obtain it. It is the root of a fruitful tree, whose leaves are for the healing of all quarrels, whose fruit is for the nourishing of all charity. Wait, therefore, on the Lord diligently, till he grant you meekness and gentleness of spirit. And be assured, that, as you make progress therein, you will make progress in faith, hope, and charity, and in all the fruits of the Spirit, which are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. In all which may ye abound, to the glory of God and of Christ, to the comfort of his church, and the edification of one another in love!

SERMON XII.

DESPISERS OF THOSE THAT ARE GOOD.

2 TIM. iii. 1, 3.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come: for men shall be.....despisers of those that are good—(not lovers of the good.)

THE word in the original is used only in this one passage of Scripture, as if many of these characteristics were so extraordinary as never to be used but in describing the last times. Strange words, to express a strange state of things; words which the Holy Spirit at no other time taketh into his lips. Of these words, that now before us properly signifies “Not lovers of the good,” and may be taken indifferently of men or of things; and as such I do intend to treat of it in the following discourse, after our ordinary method, of First opening that characteristic of the Christian and the Christian church which is denied to the men of the last times; Secondly, endeavour, with all candour as the pastor of your souls, and with all faithfulness as the minister of Christ’s church, to point out to you the signs of this evil disposition in the church in these our days.

Now, concerning "the good:" it was an old distinction, amongst the Greek and Roman philosophers, to separate the good from the beautiful or honourable on the one hand, and the useful on the other; considering them as distinct ends of human pursuit, and rating men more and more noble according as they ascended out of the lower into the higher spheres of action; from the pleasant to the useful, from the useful to the honourable, and from the honourable to the good. The pleasant, they regarded as a base object of pursuit; as terminating very much in bodily enjoyment, or immediate gratification of the tempers and passions of the mind. This is what is afterwards reproved in the text "as lovers of pleasure." The useful, or expedient—which in these times, both by politicians and Christians, is regarded as the great object of pursuit—even the ancient heathens placed low down in the scale, being better moralists than we are Christians; conceiving it to respect rather the outward effects, than the inward principles of an action; bringing it under the controul of circumstances, rather than referring it to the purpose of the will. The honourable, again, they looked upon as that which was becoming in a man; which beseemed his station, and befitted his dignity, and carried with it a grace and a comeliness of worth: that which appealed from success, to the honour of men; from the issue of the event, to the seemliness of the action. But the good was that which they esteemed it divine

in man to aim at; being distinguished from the rest, by its appealing to the eternal principles of rectitude, and directly derived from the Lord God. This they considered as far removed above the sphere of the pleasant; for the good they knew to be oft unpleasant. Far removed also above the sphere of the useful; for they knew that the good oft proved useless in the outset, yea, very inexpedient, and full of harm. Also, as much more elevated than the honourable, which still carrieth an appeal to man, though it be to man's more refined tastes and most elevated sentiments; because they knew that the good was that which intuition could not at a glance discover, or the finest moral feeling detect; but it required much painful research, much self-denying pursuit; and could be discriminated only by the few who dwelt in the recesses of their own meditations, and endeavoured to read the law written on their hearts. Such was the scale by which the philosophers of Greece and Rome measured the dignity of human actions. And even these uninspired sages, these uncircumcised heathens, would have called a man who pursued his own inclination, and followed out his own taste and humour, however that gratification might be rated—though it were the enjoyment of an eloquent sermon, or of a religious party, or of a pleasant meeting for religious ends—they would have called such an one as our religious world is generally composed of, by the epithet in the text, “Not lovers of

the good." And those who follow what is useful—whether they be the utilitarians of the political school, or the prudent disciples of expediency amongst the religious; let that usefulness be ever so enlarged or refined; though it should respect the conversion of souls, yea, though it should respect the whole church itself—would have been pronounced by the ancients as taking a low view of the subject, and regarded as men who had never risen into the love of the good. And, further, though we should seek that which is comely and beautiful in the eyes of men and in our own eyes, of honest and of good report with all; even this they would have considered as beneath the dignity of the soul, and pronounced upon us as not lovers of the good.

These notions, which the ancients entertained concerning the good, are certainly not lowered by the word of God, wherein this quality of goodness is above all measure exalted; insomuch that our Lord himself would not receive the title of good, but, upon a certain occasion, when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, who kneeled to him, and asked him, " Good master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" and Jesus said unto him, " Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God." In which words of our blessed Lord there is contained a most precious truth,—that no creature is good, but only the Creator; and that he himself, as a creature, though sinless and spotless

in his life, could not, from one who did not apprehend his Divinity, take unto himself the salutation Good master, but must refer back to the Father, in whose Godhead his own Godhead standeth represented: "There is none good but one, that is, God:" and Christ as God is good, but Christ as a creature will ever declare unto all the creatures, that they are to look for goodness in the Godhead only. *The good*, therefore, according to this word of the Lord, is truly *the divine*; and the ancients were right in elevating it far above the pleasant, the profitable, and the honourable. Moreover, in order to teach this great lesson, that goodness pertaineth only unto God, the creatures have all been permitted to fall—save the elect angels; whom, however, God faileth not to charge with folly. And that this was the great lesson taught in the fall of man, is manifest from the name of that tree which he was forbidden to eat; he was forbidden to eat of it, because the consequence of that disobedience would be the knowledge of good and evil. It was no virtue in the tree, nor in the fruit of the tree: the effect followed upon the violation of the Divine command. The creature thereby revealed its essential infirmity, and shewed that it was evil. And now it could tell where goodness lay, by having discovered where evil lay. As the idea of darkness is necessary to the idea of light, and the idea of confusion to the idea of order; so is the idea of

evil necessary to the idea of good ; and man, not knowing evil until he disobeyed the word of God, knew not the only seat of good till then ; but from thenceforth he fatally perceived, that it was not in the creature : and if not in the creature, then only in God ; for there existeth nothing besides these two, God and the creature. It may therefore be said with truth, that “none is good but one, that is, God.”

Nevertheless, it is written in the Scriptures, that “the fruit of the Spirit is goodness :” and, what is remarkable, this follows in the same train as in the passage before us ; being preceded by “long-suffering and gentleness,” as in this passage the want of it is preceded by incontinence or ungoverned haste, and fierceness or ungentleness. And, the more remarkably to distinguish this from the other fruits of the Spirit, it is written in another of Paul’s Epistles, Ephes. v. 9, “the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.” And if the young man, who came running to our Lord, had recognised in him either the Divinity of the Son, which flesh and blood could not discern ; or the fulness of the Holy Ghost, who was not yet revealed ; certes the Lord would never have reprovèd him because he called him good ; but for that he in courtesy and human respect did rashly appropriate this epithet unto one whom he believed to be a gifted man—a prophet haply, or as one of the prophets—the Lord did well rebuke this unguarded trespass upon the sacred attri-

butes of God; while at the same time he taught a solemn truth, the first of truths, that goodness belongeth only unto God. And for the same reason, that it might be known as an attribute of God only, doth the Apostle, in these two places, declare that it is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, whenever it is found in the creature. Not of the flesh, but of the Spirit; not of nature, but of grace: and not, as many of your divines now-a-days would teach you, quickened by the Spirit in the natural man, and left there to grow, by some refined and purified action of natural faith and natural intellect; no, verily—"a clean thing cannot be brought out of an unclean"—but goodness is the work, and act, and potency of the Holy Ghost; of God acting in the creature, against its own evil, and overcoming its own evil. Goodness, therefore, in the creature, is only in virtue of its being partaker of the Divine nature. It is still an attribute of God, in the person of the Holy Ghost; and it may still be said, with perfect truth, "There is none good but one, that is, God." From these premises it necessarily deriveth itself, that good works are not possible to the creature in an unrenewed state; and that whatever is entitled to that name is not the work of man, but of God working in man. The creature in himself is still evil, and obtaineth his goodness only through death, and the resurrection from death. Which death and resurrection passeth in spirit upon every man, who, having faith, is baptized; seeing baptism is a death, and burial;

and resurrection unto life. And, therefore, faith, looking upon the church of Christ as having been washed from its sins by the Holy Ghost, and living by the power of the resurrection, doth regard it to be good; good by sanctification, not good by inherent property; good, as being the temple of the Holy Ghost, but not good as being in the flesh, against all whose impurities and wickedness it is the continual labour and diligence of the Holy Ghost to contend. Moreover, to the eye of faith not only is the church or body of Christ good, but likewise every creature of God: according to that which is written, "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer:" because faith doth contemplate the whole creation as redeemed by Christ, when he redeemed the body of man, which is the apex of the pyramid of visible creation; and, though still in bondage of corruption, faith regardeth it as having in it a holy seed, a word, a covenant of God, that it shall yet become holy and good. And herein consisteth the difference between the act of thanksgiving, and the act of seeking a blessing upon the creature, before using it for meat, or drink, or any thing else; which latter is an acknowledgment of faith that it needeth the sanctification of the word and of prayer, before it can be meet for the food of a renewed, and to faith a risen, body; and by this act of faith the creature is sanctified. But this is quite another thing from the act of thanksgiving, after the

DESPISERS OF THOSE THAT ARE GOOD.

oyment of God's good creature; which is an
knowledge to God for his gift: the one
ing of our office as priests, to sanctify; the
ther being of our office as creatures, to give
hanks. So that, when looked into, this custom
of blessing and thanksgiving before and after
our meals, doth, like all the customs of the
earlier church, rest upon a great principle,
which is the principle under consideration,—that
to faith every creature is good, and unto sight
every creature is evil. And thus have we at-
tained another stage of our discourse, that
through the redemption of Christ, contemplated
by faith, there is good in every thing: a good-
ness, however, essentially derived from God,
and, I may say, subsisting in the creature only
as it subsisteth in God: for it is in virtue of the
personal union between the Divine and human
nature of Christ that the creature becometh
good; being, as it were, clasped unto, and
bound in, the Godhead, by that one personality
of the two natures of Christ; yet not intermin-
gled therewith, by reason of the distinctness of
these two natures: and being by us perceived as
good only through the indwelling of God in us
in the person of the Holy Spirit; which enableth
us by faith to contemplate the creation no
longer out of God, but in God, and yet distinct
from God, through that most simple, sublime,
and perfect mystery of the two natures of God
and man existing in Christ, and, along with the
nature of man, all the dependencies which are
suspended from man, likewise in Him existing.

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Having thus arrived at the knowledge of the derived goodness which is in the creature, we may proceed to distinguish and discriminate those who are lovers of the good from those who are not lovers of the good, and so arrive at this characteristic of the last times. There seem to me to be four distinct subjects, by the observation of which we shall discover whether we be lovers of the good, or not. The first is, God; the second, is one's-self; the third, is other men; the fourth, the lower creation: each one of which a lover of the good will contemplate and delight in, after a way which the lover of the beautiful, or the useful, or the pleasant, never attaineth unto. To these four objects of man's affection I would now endeavour to draw your attention; that each one may be able to ascertain for himself, and all of us for the times in which we live, whether we delight in the pursuit of what is good.

And first, concerning God, from whom all goodness proceedeth. One who loves what is pleasant, as his chief good, will represent God unto his own mind, and delight to have him represented by others, as full of indulgence to the inclinations of man, delighting in human happiness, and tender to human frailties. They will speak of him as all grace, and all mercy, in Jesus Christ, whose yoke is easy, and whose burden is light. His more awful attributes, and acts of sovereignty—such as the Deluge, the destruction of the nations of Canaan, the standing monument of his

severity in the rejection of his own people; the lake which he hath prepared for the devil and his angels and reprobate men—they will not hear of. ‘He loveth to see people enjoy themselves;’ that is, he giveth them their own way. These are the views which are taken of God by those who love, and take as much of their own pleasure as can be got within the laws of health and the saving of appearances: and of how many, calling themselves the church, are these the doctrines of their creed concerning God; each one shaping Him—awful thought!—and his worship, to the fashion of their own mind, and the conveniency of their own rank! God forgive me if I err, but certainly I believe that this is the God of all Socinians, of almost all Arminians, or believers in the doctrine of works, both priests and people; and the root of it is, that they are lovers of pleasure, and not lovers of goodness.—Those, again, who are lovers of the useful, speculate concerning God the only wise, the only living and true God, as if He were an adventurer who had undertaken, and was endeavouring after the remedy of a very evil and mischievous condition, into which the world had some how or other fallen. And, refusing most obstinately to judge of any thing but by its tendencies, or rather by its actual success, they enter very little into the being and attributes of God at all; but content themselves with opening the scheme of salvation which is in Christ; shewing out the adaptation of the Gospel to certain ends of morality, and

polity, and usefulness in general. Unto all such God is but the great head and first planner of the business, in which they serve as under-workmen. That God hath a purpose, and a scheme, and an end in view, through which alone his wisdom and his will is to be discovered, is a most solemn truth; but that he ever intended any human mind to grope about that little spot where his station might be, instead of rising into the knowledge of God's own subsistency, beauty, and surpassing goodness in it all, is base underling bondage. Under which, labour, alas! the great body of those called the Religious World, who will not be lifted into any elevation of doctrine concerning the blessed Trinity; concerning the union and distinctness of the two natures in Christ; concerning the eternal generation of the Son, which all human nature and human redemption do but shadow forth; concerning the procession of the Holy Ghost, bringing along with Him the good will of the Father and the blessed love of Christ, to dwell in us; or concerning any other mystery: which, hearing discoursed of, straightway their degraded and jealous spirit of bondage crieth out, 'Have a care of him, have a care of him, he is to be feared!' For all which adoration of the useful they are drudged, like Sampson in the mill—gathering money, and laying it out again. This is the misery, the bondage, into which ye have brought the church; the darkness in which you would fain keep her; following with the hue and cry of your

ignorant wonder and malignant censure every one who teacheth the people to ascend nearer unto the Throne, and look more earnestly into the face of God.—Again; the lovers of the beautiful, fair, or honourable—of whom there are but few making any profession of religion, the most part looking upon it as a coarse and vulgar creed—when they think of God, do so by reflection from some part of his works wherein they take delight. Instead of looking into the Gospel, to discover the fair proportions and honourable means and beautiful ends of the Divine purpose, they look upon a flower-garden, or a landscape, or a scene of nature in her grander forms,—the Appennines, the Alps, the lakes and mountains of Scotland: in which they may find emblems of the beauty and order and combination of the Infinite Mind. Instead of looking into the face of Jesus Christ, and the wonderful fashion of his person, the manner of his life, and the end of his mission, to behold the majestic, meek, and simple lines of personal beauty; they look for them in the philosophers, and heroes, and saints, and statesmen, of former or present times; in their favourite ministers, and philanthropists; who, however noble in their kind, as creatures of God, are but imperfect, and haply ill-formed, members of that express image of God which was given complete in Jesus Christ. Oh, and this is an excellent department of human desire which they fail in! A noble theme of discourse is the beauty and loveliness of God

Time, he comes to discover the eternal good.

in Jesus Christ, and was wont to be the theme of his spouse's delight:—to tell how he was the chief among ten thousand, full of comeliness and beauty; great also in might, and terrible unto his enemies; but constant in his love; whose arms are ever around the neck of his beloved church. But it is gone! The church hath become a drudging housewife, a careful Martha; who cannot rise into the liberty of loving her Lord, of loving him as a husband, and learning from him as a bosom friend. Yet is there still a higher view of the Godhead, to which a lover of *the good* addresseth himself. This is, the consideration of all his works, and of all his ways, and of all his word, in the undoubting confidence that it is good; the severe as the gentle, the righteous as the merciful, the evil as the good. He is not afraid to meditate the fall, both of angels and of men; he is not afraid to meditate election and reprobation; nor is he afraid to meditate hell as well as heaven. His confidence in God's goodness is such, his desire to know his goodness and to be transformed into the image of it is such, that he proceedeth fearlessly, like a child in the arms of its mother, and openeth his ear greedily unto all things which concern the King. There are no favourite attributes of God with him, there are no favourite manifestations of his purpose: he loveth God for his goodness, and he knoweth that his goodness is the foundation of all his doings: and thus, through patient and earnest meditation, he cometh to discover the eternal good-

ness which there is in permitting the creature to reveal its sinfulness, that Christ might be manifested, the great end of the Father's purpose, and, through Christ, the glory of God might for ever shine. He beholds the creation very good, as it came from its Maker's hands; but unconscious whence its goodness was derived, or at least not sufficiently conscious; neither wherein its goodness stood. And how much more of transcendant goodness doth there appear to him, in the eternal Son of God uniting himself to the substance of the fallen woman, and so laying the foundation-stone of another state of the creation, in which it shall stand in a far nobler, even an eternal and infallible position of goodness! Oh, how the lover of the good findeth his food in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ! What never-ending theme of rapture to him, is the dutifulness of that Son of God, who, to shew his Father's invisible countenance—as well the condescension of his grace unto his creature fallen, as the brightness of his glory to his creature redeemed—did submit to take creature form; to come in the form of a servant, in the likeness of sinful flesh; and to become a curse for us. Time doth not permit me to expatiate upon the delight which such an one hath in beholding the glory of God as it is seen in Jesus Christ. It is not the fruit of beholding, but the delight of beholding; it is not how much better he is for beholding, but how goodly it is to behold: not merely what beauty, but what riches of

goodness, what beaming love, what all-embracing pity, what succour, what help, what bounty, what blessedness ! And in this way proceedeth the lover of the good in his meditations of God.

We next come to try this issue with our own conscience, and the times in which we live, by considering the second object of observation, which is, One's-self : whether it is the pleasant, the useful, the beautiful, or the good, which we are most desirous to cultivate in ourselves, and to which we devote ourselves. He that loveth the good in himself, will be in continual consultation of the Holy Spirit speaking in his conscience, as to what is best, not what is most becoming, most useful, or most pleasant. What is God's will ? for that only is good ; what is my Lord's example ? what is the voice of the Spirit in the church ? and what is the admonition of the Spirit in my own conscience ? Meditation, and reflection, and firmness of purpose, will characterize such a man ; because God is unchangeable, and the law of righteousness inflexible. I have a work to do, saith he to himself continually, which the world knoweth not of ; and his best friends will oft come about him, and say, Nay, but it becometh thee not ; and others will say, Thou wilt hurt thy usefulness ; and others, What a morose, miserable, fanatic he is ! Oh ! he that loveth the good, and hath set his heart upon it, will be a singular, unpatronized man ; whose " life is hid with Christ in God : " yet very patient in his well-

not merely what beauty, but what riches to

doing; knowing that in due time he shall reap if he faint not! And his good will be evil spoken of, and he will be buffeted for his goodness; but he will take it patiently. Stephen was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost; and he was the first of the disciples who was put to death. Nevertheless, the good man hath his reward in feeling and obeying the admonitions of God's good Spirit; and he knoweth, that what became Christ, well becometh any Christian: and he well perceiveth, that the Holy Spirit is forming Christ within him the hope of glory: and though he may not immediately see of the travail of his soul, and the world may say, "He hath laboured in vain, he hath spent his strength for nought;" he answereth, "Yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my way with my God." And he who seeketh after goodness within himself doth soon find, and exclaim, with Paul, "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing!" Even the heathen Socrates was wont to say, that he had not his wisdom from himself, but from a good Spirit that visited him. And, oh! how familiar will a good man, thus denied unto himself, become with the Holy Ghost, in whom alone is all his goodness! and he will say, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the power of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." But the common people will hear him gladly: those who are

removed from the envious pride of world-courting Pharisees, and the scoffing derision of faithless Sadducees, will recognise in him a good man; and the eye of the poor will bless him, as said those Jews who entreated Christ to go with the centurion; "for he is a good man, and hath built us a synagogue." Oh the peace, the quiet love, which a good man sheddeth around him! He seeketh not the haunts of crowds. He hath no one place, one time, one way of doing good; but, wherever he is, he findeth it, in preventing the evil: wherever there is evil, there is his vocation. He is always in his workshop, and his tools are ever at his hand; for truth, and righteousness, and pity, and love, are the tools with which he every where worketh the work of goodness. I start from the image which I conceive, because it doth so rebuke us all with its unseen labour, and unheard-of diligence. Ah! what an eye-service, what a hand-service, and what a fair-weather service there is of God! Is He popular, then an hundred tongues will speak for him; is He useful, a hundred hands will serve him: is He pleasant, a hundred faces will smile sweetly upon him: is He simply good, felt to be good in the heart, known to be truth in the mind—for truth in the mind is goodness in the act—then who heedeth Him, who serveth Him, who smileth sweetly, and obeyeth Him? This thing is no more; or if it be, as ashamed, it is fain to hide its face. Yes; I believe there are good men, I

trust there are many good men, whose right hand knoweth not what their left hand doeth, and who within their closet pray to God in secret, and whom he will openly reward.

And now, thirdly, love we good men? I think it is departed wholly, for the love of gifted men, men of talents and of understanding, on the one hand; and for the love of benevolent, and charitable, and useful men, on the other. Instead of dreading unsanctified talent, as the most adverse unto God and friendly unto Satan of all the possessions of man; and keeping by the good old maxim of our forefathers, that gifts are not graces; the men of these times set their affections and pay their respects to men of great talents, of great eloquence in the senate, of great wealth, of great skill in affairs, of great weight and influence in the state. I myself have had opportunities of witnessing this, which made me weep. I have seen good men rush into the arms of open reprobates; nay, sue them and woo them unto the unnatural and hideous alliance; entreat them to become their patrons, and the patrons of their societies, and the patrons of their seats of learning: for all which they should have looked out for good men, and accepted of good men only. You know, brethren, without my going about to enumerate the instances, to what an awful height this love, this endurance of unsanctified talent, hath arisen. For once I have been entreated to serve any society for

the worth or integrity of my character, I have been a thousand times, without exaggeration, for the talents which they supposed me to possess, or for the popularity, the transient popularity, which I might chance to have at the time. It is notorious, it is the rebuke of the very wicked against the church, that she entreateth men according to their place, power, and popularity, not according to their goodness. Such and such a one, they say, is worth the fishing for; without considering that it is the net of the Gospel with which they are to fish. All this ariseth from want of faith in God, or from faith in a crowd, a multitude, a name, and other things of sight, instead of looking to the hand of God, and the blessing of his Spirit; instead of looking to the promise of God, and having faith in the children of the Holy Ghost, who are the salt of the earth, the light of the world, and the seed of every good undertaking. The question is, 'Is his voice pleasant unto the people? Doth he play pleasantly upon his instrument?' Not, 'Speaketh he the truth? speaketh he the wholesome but unsavoury truth?' Not, 'Hath he the approbation of the good?' but, 'Hath he the approbation of men?' And if he come under that doomed class of whom all men speak well, then is he above all others to be preferred. Good men! The influence of the best divine whom I have ever met with, the influence of the truest man and best servant of the Spirit, will not weigh a feather in the scale

of men's opinions, unless he be also a man of popular talents, able to charm the ear and amuse the fancy of the mob. Verily, good men, who speak the truth, having the fear of God before their eyes and the Spirit of God in their hearts, are positively hindered and interdicted from serving the church and speaking unto the people. So soon as they begin to utter a truth which is not popular, and to expose the evil which is mixed with the good; when they begin to fulfil the office of good men, by pointing out the evil; then exactly begin they to be discarded. When they allow the evil to pass unnoticed, then are they beloved. It is not the love of good men at present that moves the church in her preferences and predilections; but it may perhaps be the love of things, by whomsoever performed, good, bad, or indifferent. This is exactly what they profess: 'Let us see the good done, by whomsoever done: so that good is done, it mattereth not by whom.' This is the fourth and last issue by which we have to try the question.

Now, concerning this notion—as if good could be done without any respect to the person who doeth it—I observe, that though God doth certainly, by all agents, however evil, accomplish his own good purposes, yet is not that *good*, but *evil*, which doth not proceed from the immediate suggestion of the Holy Ghost; which is not directed by faith in Christ, unto the ends of Christ's kingdom, for the accomplishment of which he

died; and which is not inspired by the knowledge of God's purpose, the obedience of his commandment, and the desire of his glory. The good result of any measure maketh not the measure good; otherwise there were no *evil*, seeing all evil worketh good. In the purpose of God, indeed, evil is good; but in the works of men and angels, evil is the very contrary of good; and, therefore, that is evil which is moved by a will adverse to the will of God. It is the most abominable of the Papal abominations, that the end sanctifieth the means: therefore I pray you say not, 'So that good is done, it mattereth not by whom done.' Neither doth the example of another make any thing good—not even the example of Christ—without the co-operation of Christ's Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Ghost, to imitate Christ is as vain as it is ignorant, and will end in superstition and wickedness. Therefore, it is an exceeding evil thing, and by no means to be commended, that we should follow a multitude to do good, any more than a multitude to do evil. We should follow Christ to do good, through the Holy Spirit, because God hath commanded it. I do not say but it is better for the world, and for men in the natural state, to be under the influence of good than of evil example; nor do I hinder, but rather rejoice, that the light of the church should shed a twilight over the darkness of the world: but sacred and holy truth requireth us to say, that the world is not

good in thus imitating and mimicking that which they should possess through faith that is in Jesus Christ; and we come back to our first position, that God only is good, and that the creature is wholly evil, except in so far as it is seen as redeemed by Christ, and travelling into newness of birth. He that hath faith to look through the rottenness of the old seed, and see the beautiful flower and fruitful plant which is to come out of it, can pronounce it good. In this season of spring, if you could turn up the earth, and see the rotten corruption of the seed sown in it, you would say it is evil; but hope, which looketh unto the waving harvest, saith it is good: so every one that by faith can look into the womb of nature, during this the seed-time—for it hath been seed-time ever since Christ, the *Seed*, fell into the ground; the earth having been sown ever since with the resurrection seed of the bodies of the righteous—he, I say, who can comprehend the baptism of regeneration which elemental nature received by the waters of the Deluge, only he can see good in every thing. But that man must be full of the hope of the resurrection, that man must be a believer in the days of restitution; which hope, which faith, is all but departed from the earth. They now think that the accursed world is good in itself: they think that the Ethiopian can be washed white: they think that nature, that corrupt nature, will, by the labour of men, rise into millennial beauty.

Methinks, instead of being lovers of the good, men have gone about to call evil good. The mystery of the fallen condition of the creature is unexplained and forgotten; and the hope of its resurrection glory is departed. A man conceives a thing—haply it is the best thing he can conceive—and he calleth it good; and he explaineth his conception to another; and they lay their heads together, and set forth the device as a good device, and a society is formed to carry it into good effect: but is it therefore *good* because many have approved it? No, verily; that is good which Christ hath ordained his church to perform. It is good to hold fast sound doctrine; it is good to brighten up our hopes; it is good to produce the fruits of the Spirit; it is good to enjoy the communion of saints. But where is the breadth and richness of Divine doctrine any more displayed? where, the glorious brilliancy of resurrection hope? Who dare speak of the day of the Lord, in its corrupting judgments upon the old withering slough of nature,—the slug, the grub, out of which the beautiful and bright and soaring creature shall proceed? Who speaketh of the travail-pangs with which nature is to break up, and give birth to her long-expected child of a new world? As I said, the hope of ages is lost, the mystery of creation departed; and if men even so much as speak of those things—that is, of the good which is in all things—it is held a folly, a dream, a novelty.

Having thus proved our text to apply to these times by the fourfold examination of men's thoughts and actings as they respect God, themselves, other men, and the outward world, I entreat you, dear brethren, to be lovers of the good. Not to despise the pleasant, when it is good; but not to love any thing because it is pleasant. Not to despise the useful, but to love it when it is good; yet not to love any thing merely because it is useful. Not to despise the beautiful, that which to the spirit is comely; but not to love it because it is beautiful and comely, but because it is good. I pray you to see the evil of every thing in its natural estate, and the good of every thing in its regenerate estate; the evil of every thing as it is beheld by sight, the good of every thing as it is beheld by faith, and entertained by hope. Men of faith are good men, men of hope are good men; and they are good only as they are faithful and hopeful: therefore be ye men of faith and hope, if ye would be men of charity and goodness. Above all things, delight in God, for his goodness, for his great goodness, unto the children of men. Meditate the mystery of the connexion between the creature and God, as represented in the one person of Christ; a union beyond all unions close, a distinctness beyond all distinctions distinct. If you would see the goodness of this fallen world, all evil though it be, see the good-

ness of Christ's human nature, all evil though his flesh be; and if ye would see the goodness to which this creation is to come, and be filled with the glory of its goodness, see, see, the glory to which Christ's fallen flesh came by the resurrection from the dead. The whole mystery of being able to love the good, consisteth in being able to apprehend that Christ was in sinful flesh, and yet not sinful: the whole mystery of being able to delight yourselves in the creation of God without sinning, is to see it living in the promise of a resurrection, and having in its womb the child of the resurrection. We love the mother for the child which the mother is to produce; into whose being the being of the mother shall pass; for, like Rachel, she shall die in giving birth. As the great hope of the world, the crucifixion of Christ, was an act of sorrow and an act of might, Benoni and Benjamin; so shall this sorrowful estate of the creature die, to give birth to that which shall be mighty and glorious: and therefore we love and we pity the creature, who hath been brought into bondage not willingly, by seeing the glory to which it is destined, and the good which is actually in it, under the promise of the word of God. Therefore, meditate the incarnation of Christ, the death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ; which is the beginning and the ending, the first and the last of all God's works: as a preparation for which, the world

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was good in its creation state; as the ground and promise of which, the world is good in its fallen state: in the consummation of which, at the resurrection of the saints, and the restitution of all things, and the coming of Christ, the great Redeemer, the great Physician, the great Inheritor, the great Christ and Lord, all shall be for ever and infallibly good.

SERMON XIII.
TRAITORS.

2 TIM. iii. 1, 4.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come : for men shall be.....traitors.

THE word traitor, in common speech, hath come to be restricted in its application to one who is guilty of the crime of high treason—that is, the betrayal of his allegiance unto the king, and the taking of measures which make against the dignity and prerogative of the king. Of which crime, the essence consisteth in the breach of the allegiance and fealty to which every subject is bound. This, which is the highest and worst kind of treachery that can occur in human laws, hath, as is often the case, appropriated the word traitor to itself : which, in its proper and large sense, signifies one who gives forth unto another, or unto many, without consideration, that which was committed to himself in confidence and trust ; a betrayer ; a publisher of what is committed to his faithfulness ; a giver abroad before he hath liberty to do so ; a deliverer up of that which he ought not to surrender. It

is applied to Judas, because he delivered Christ by his information; and so it came to be applied, in the primitive church, to those who, in their zeal against the Christian religion, forgot all the ties of nature and of friendship and of hospitality, and informed against, and delivered up, their nearest of kin, and their dearest in affection, to the tribunals and prisons and deaths of the Pagan persecutors: as it is written, "The brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child; and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death." The like breaking-up and contempt of the most sacred obligations, which it is the care of religion to bind faster and faster, by giving them Divine sanctions and a Divine end, we have seen accomplished by that infidel or liberal spirit which broke out in Papal Europe at the era of the French revolution; when it was thought the highest pitch of noble-mindedness, and the utmost attainment in morality, to go forward, and give forth into the hands of the public executioners every friend, and every relative—the nearer, the greater the honour, because, as they said, the greater the sacrifice—all, as their intoxicated reason taught them, for the advancement of the commonwealth, and for the good of human kind. It is this spirit, of setting at nought bonds, trusts, and confidences, however holy, under some false persuasion of virtue, and specious name of disinterestedness, which is de-

clared in our text as being about to characterize the last times. And we have now, by the grace of God, to endeavour to shew you, that this form of the mystery of iniquity is even now working in the midst of us, and will speedily, if not prevented by the grace of God, manifest the same dissolution of all the ties and obligations of human life, under the pretence of liberality of principle and zeal for the common good. In doing which, I shall invert the order of my discourse; and shew, first of all, the form of the evil, as it now existeth; then expose the false view of duty and interest, from which it proceedeth; and, lastly, teach you how you may best be preserved holy and blameless in the midst of the common danger.

Now, with respect to the existence of such a characteristic in the midst of us as the betrayal of those whom obligation of various kinds bindeth us to protect and preserve, I have no doubt whatever of being able to shew you the proofs of it in every quarter of society and life: in doing which, I shall ascend from the lower unto the higher, arming myself at once with all charity, and with all faithfulness. I begin, then, with servants, to whom their master's property, and house, and honour are committed; and I boldly ask, if it is not a universal complaint that these trusts are neither felt nor performed as sacred, but set to a side, for ease, for convenience, for pleasure, for vice; yea, for a share of the plunder unto which they betray

the access to the gangs of common robbers who infest every quarter of the populous towns and country? The true feeling of a servant is, that he hath a sacred place within the hallowed circle of a family's confidence; to whose interest, as to his own, he should have an eye; of whose largest possession he should be as careful as his own smallest portion; of whose affairs, which a servant cannot but look upon, he should be as trusty as of his own; of whose failings he should be tender, not to reveal them, except upon legal penalty of concealment; of whose words he should be careful not to repeat them, that the walls of the house, and the protection which law giveth to all within the threshold of the house, may be the emblem of that unobserved affection, unhindered freedom, and undisturbed confidence, which reign over the family circle which God hath gathered together. And let me say, that the servants who dare to betray, or care not to feel, or despise to be under these holy obligations; who stand up for separate interests of their own; who feel no obligation but to do their work, conceive no affection, nourish no reverence, for their master's person; are not far from proving traitors unto the sacred rights of the family, and will give way to the tempter whenever he solicits them;—and that those who open their master's door to strangers, without obtaining first their master's consent; who reveal their master's secrets, and carry out

family reports ; who waste their master's substance, or spend their master's time ; are not liable to become, but actually are, traitors, in the true sense of the word. But the truth is, that the very feeling of which I am discoursing is departed. Masters have ceased to expect it, and make the best shift they can without it, by locks and keys, by short terms of engagement, by suspicious and jealous watchings, by threatenings of bringing before a magistrate, by withholdings of character, and other forms of intimidation and jealousy, from which religion had redeemed the relation of master and servant, but which irreligion or infidelity is laying it under again. I say, it is the duty of every master, upon engaging a servant, to open these things, now forgotten, in some set and solemn manner, and to act upon them, according as he findeth the servant may be trusted ; for the times have grown so ignorant of duty, and accustomed to betrayal, under the specious name of liberality, that it were like casting pearls before swine, or placing money in the way of a thief, to open without reserve the sanctuary of family confidence unto servants, as servants now are found.

Next, with respect to workmen whom we employ in our various trades and professions, not dwelling with us in the house but engaged for a time, and who through us win the bread of themselves and their children, and we through them carry on the operations of agriculture, merchandize, and arts ; what less can I say, than

that the spirit of betraying a master's trust, and, when they can, preventing a master's prosperity, by striking their work when a master most doth need their service, hath become the order of the day; hath become the legalized constitution of that relationship; hath, indeed, become to our liberals the great hope of blessing unto those who are called operatives, and whom our fathers were wont to call workmen and hired servants? What is the nature of a master's trust committed unto such? Is it not in trust of their help that he undertaketh to execute great works and heavy orders, wherein he hath risked much property, and, which is more, his good faith? And is it not a betrayal of all that is and can be committed to workmen, that at such a time they should draw off from him who hath given them employment so long, and suffer him to be ruined in all his interests and in all his confidences, if he will not consent to come in to their terms? Yea, moreover, and will go about with the utmost savageness to maltreat and maim and slay, and even murder, the workman who shall obey duty and affection, rather than give in to combination and treachery. And so little is this the offspring of ignorance; so much is it the offspring of that liberality which eloquent orators applaud, and fervid poets celebrate, and those calling themselves the religious world do sanctify; that it is not amongst the ignorant peasantry of the country, but the political pamphlet-readers of the towns; and not of the ignorant towns, but of the best-educated and

most intellectual, such as Glasgow and Paisley, and the other manufacturing districts of the west of Scotland, which is by far the most intellectual part of this island, and with whose attainments in general knowledge I myself have had perhaps a better opportunity of becoming acquainted than any other man;—yet true it is, and of verity, that, though they be men, upon an average, equal in understanding and the power of speech to the best-educated and best-informed classes with whom I have had intercourse, among them have the greatest enormities, and the most obstinate pertinacity in holding out against all overtures of duty and of grace, been manifested; and for this very reason, that their understanding hath enabled them to go deeper into those disorganizing and ruinous principles of liberality, which have broken up this second relationship of man to man, and made it to be discharged upon a great principle of reciprocal treachery. For I am not here to justify the higher classes, nor to impeach the lower, but to speak truth unto all; and I make no doubt in declaring, that the masters, by their great avarice, covetousness, and haste to be rich, have in no small degree produced this evil condition of things under which we groan: for, giving no heed to the relationship already existing between master and servant, they would, with offers of higher wages, and other bribes, draw them away from their trusts, and foster in them that spirit of forsak-

ing a master and foregoing the right of conscience, which prepared them for that treachery and betrayal upon the large scale which now reigneth over and rioteth upon the trusts of a master and the trust-worthiness of a workman.

I come next to speak of tradesmen and shop-keepers, who supply us with the goods necessary for daily life : and surely a minister of the Gospel and of eternal morality may speak, where the daily press, all corrupt as it is, hath been honest enough to speak. Oh, it maketh me ashamed of the order to which I belong, albeit in itself the noblest in the world, to think that we should have been fawning upon and flattering the people with idle and false accounts of the great improvement of society and of the church ! when the daily newspapers have been exposing the increase of crime, the underhand system of bribery between tradesmen and servants, the adulteration of commodities sold for genuine, and the other manifold betrayals of trust with which society is grieved ! Methinks the hireling press, the mob-adoring press, those devout worshippers of public opinion and zealous deniers of any other God, have become truer and bolder moralists than we, who occupy the chair of verity, and are appointed by Jesus Christ, and by law encouraged and established for the very end of speaking the truth in the love of it, in the fear of God, and free from the fear of man. For it hath been made apparent beyond all

question, that systematic fraud hath come to pervade every class and order of men with whom you deal; who are not content with the knavery of selling that for genuine which they know to be adulterated, but will even take your servants into their conspiracy against your purse, your health, your life; and retain them by large presents, yea, by a fixed rate upon every account, to deal with them for those wares and commodities which the family requireth. I need not go about to establish this, which is well known, and open as the day. But perhaps you know not its true name, and therefore I will teach it you; its true name is treachery; and he that doeth it is a traitor! That man is a betrayer of the sacred trust which is reposed in him, who to him that would buy selleth not that very thing which he asketh for, and upon which, haply, dependeth his health and life. He is guilty of stealing and robbing, when he seeketh and obtaineth a price from my ignorance which he durst not ask from another's knowledge. Foolish and wicked man! he betrays that simplicity, that confidence of a stranger, which is so honourable to himself; and he honours in its stead the sharpness of a knowing, perhaps knavish, dealer. He, truly, treateth that which is good as if it were evil, and that which is evil as if it were good. He is guilty, therefore, of dealing dishonestly, and seducing the faithfulness of my servants, who doth present, or give encouragement to, any such bribes, to induce them to

deal with him rather than with another. If any one is entitled to an acknowledgment of grace, over and above the exact balance of honesty, it is surely not the servant, but the master, whose custom you enjoy. Bear with me, brethren, for opening these sores and gangrenes of the body politic, or, I should rather say, the body ecclesiastic—for it is not with that nothing, called the public, but with that everlasting thing called the covenanted church, with which I have to do;—and I solemnly make known to you, that such unfaithfulness as to the mammon of unrighteousness doth effectually shut the door against your possessing the true riches. “He that is unfaithful in the least, is unfaithful also in the greatest; and he that is faithful in the least, is faithful also in the greatest.”

When we rise above the three classes already mentioned, we ascend into a region of obligation where the treachery which existeth in the community is more difficult to be discerned and exposed, because there is not the same visible element of money to help our sordid minds in the estimation of it; but that it is not the less real on that account, I am persuaded, both by observation, and by the reflection that every reform, and every corruption, proceedeth by the natural course from above, downwards; and not from below, upwards. Give heed to me again, therefore, while I undertake the painful task of opening the betrayal of trusts in the higher walks of life. I call it painful, because

I would reverence my superiors, and cannot, but by the force of truth, permit myself to expose their betrayals of their trust.

Now, I will begin with my own profession, which is contracted unto Christ by one tie, and unto the state by another tie. We are contracted unto Christ by the solemn tie of preaching out the truth of the word, and the sacraments, and the ordinances of the Gospel : which tie is violated and betrayed by Arminian and Pelagian, not to say Socinian, heresies ; by a withholding of the truth, both as concerneth doctrine and morals ; by a total neglect of shewing forth the nature and obligations of the holy sacraments. So that, for grace preached, we have works preached ; for truth, we have falsehood ; for unity of the spirit, we have the divisiveness of private judgment ; and for religion, liberality.—We are contracted, secondly, to the state, by the political obligation of holding forth the doctrines and maintaining the discipline contained in the standards of the two established churches, the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and the Episcopalian Church of England : and as we have betrayed Christ's trust, so have we betrayed the trust committed to us by the state ; for the doctrine of our standards is not fully preached, and the discipline of the church is not enforced ; the people are not visited with pastoral care ; the priesthood is not purged, and observed, and encouraged, with Presbyterian or Episcopal watch-

fulness. I, who am a minister of an established church, say, that the churches have betrayed their trust, and are now justly visited by God with the forfeiture of their rights, and the admission of all classes to their responsibilities. I say, this is just, but fearful, retribution on the part of God.

And now I come to speak of the state, which by solemn oaths and covenants innumerable, and by sanctions three times sacred, and by penalties fearful, even to banishment and forfeitures of estate, is bound by law, by all ties most sacred and holy, to govern this land after a Christian manner, under responsibility to Christ, and to Christ alone. But, behold how they have betrayed their trust! attempting, again and again, to admit Papists, the greatest enemies of our Lord Jesus Christ except Infidels, unto the communion and responsibility of that power which the law and constitution of the land have separated unto Christ and the followers of Christ alone! And now, being restrained of the lesser, they aim at the greater evil, where men are altogether fallen asleep. Not having been able to assail the city by the oft-battered breach, they take it at the gate, where the sentinels are asleep or off their guard; and would even now (which God avert!) lay open the offices of power and trust and legislation to unconfessed, unprofessing men, who esteem the church of Christ a light matter, and consider the Sacrament of his body and

blood to be a thing which men can live and die without; although Christ hath said, and many times in one discourse declared it, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.” This, I say, is treason, and highest treason, to the King of kings. Ignorance may not understand it, and error may take arms against it; yet nevertheless, seeing the subject draweth on to it (and the time was when every Reformer of Scotland and of England would have made it the theme of most earnest expostulation) I affirm that for a Christian state, a church state (for there is no state-church in this land, but an apostolical church; yet there is a church state; that is, a state which hath declared itself Christian, and hath constructed all its covenants upon that express basis)—For such a state, I say, to open its offices of power and legislation to the upholders of the Pope, or to the deniers of Christ, or, which is the same thing, to those who will exhibit no confession of their faith in him nor profession of their allegiance to him, is, I say, treason high, the highest treason, against Christ’s Royal prerogative, and the most wilful and fatal shipwreck of the most ancient institutions of the United Kingdoms. They may call this political preaching. No; it is the application of my text to another class of men; and it would have been cowardice, as well as unfaithfulness, for me to have withheld it. And how could

I expect a blessing upon a discourse which treateth of treachery, if I were to set the example myself, by my unfaithfulness? It is true, those to whom I address this topic of my discourse are mighty: yes; they are mighty, and I honour their high estate. I know that they are gods; but I know, also, that God standeth in the congregation of the mighty: he judgeth among the gods. And hear his words unto them, Psal. lxxxii. 6: "I have said, Ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High; but ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes."—Am I not afraid to utter these things? Yes, I am afraid; but what are my fears? that they should stand in the way of God's truth, for which the Son of God preferred to die. Do I not know that it will give offence to many of those whom I love, and ought to cherish? Yes; I know it, and I feel it, at every word I utter, at every step I take: but ought I not to love you, by teaching you how to bear vexation for the truth's sake? ought I not to cherish you, by teaching you how to endure crucifixion for truth's sake? I seek the truth. I know of no interest, and desire to know none, but the truth: and I desire ever to speak it unto all men, in the love of it.

II. Having thus opened the nature and exposed the prevalency of the evil contained in the text, I am now, in the Second place, to shew you the fallacious arguments with which it attempteth to make way against the ordinances of

religion, and to triumph over the ancient bulwarks of the church. The first of them is, By representing every thing which anciently was esteemed the rule of conscience, by the name of bigotry. If, for example, in engaging a domestic servant, I were to say, 'My young woman, have you been baptized? have you sat down at the Lord's table?' and she were to answer me, 'No;' 'then you cannot be a faithful servant unto me, because you have not been an obedient servant unto your Master which is in heaven;' immediately I would be branded as the most illiberal and ensnaring of men, by attempting to impose a test upon my servant, and tempting her to desecrate the holy communion. If, again, I were to say unto the same person, 'What feelings, my young woman, do you bear towards the church of which I am a member? and would you be willing to go and sit along with my family, at the foot of my seat, or behind it, as was the manner of our fathers, that I might see and know your reverence of God's holy ordinances, and be able to interrogate you concerning the doctrine and practice which you had heard?' and she were to answer me, that she was not willing to do so; for she thought an established church an unchristian thing, and could not conform to its ordinances: and I were to say, 'Then you cannot be a servant in my house, where every thing is conducted according to those ordinances of the church which respect the family;' why this

my tenderness to my servant's conscience, not to bring her into a family with which she could not heartily hold communion; this my dutifulness to the church of which I am a member; would be decried, and exposed to public contempt, as a disgrace to the character of a good man, and an open insult to the enlightened times in which we live.

Again: if I were to bring a charge against any servant, because she had betrayed the confidence of my family in reporting certain evils it may be—for what family is so blessed as to be without them?—the question would be taken up as if I had acted most illiberally and tyrannically by my servant, for her speaking the truth, and exposing what is evil. Oh, yes; the censure of public opinion is very conscientious, and very nice, when evil is spoken! By all means let the truth be spoken! But, alas, alas! when any good thing is maintained—as that a servant shall not violate his master's confidence, except under penalty of law—the truth drops unheeded to the ground, is haply trampled under foot. And so on I might proceed, through all the catalogue of acts of treachery which I have mentioned above, and shew that it is the use and wont of the times in which we live to censure faithfulness as the excess of illiberality, and the essence of bigotry.

Now, in answer to all this charge of bigotry, I would ask, What are those who are placed by God in responsible places of society to do?

Are they to operate by principles which act directly on the conscience, or by outward advantages, which act upon the senses? Are we to address ourselves to the fear of God, or to the fear of man? to what is common to all men, or to what is peculiar and proper only to self? Is it more generous, is it more noble, to lay down rules of conscience for preventing, or to find out expedients for remedying, an evil? Bigotry, properly so called, consisteth in a conscience not enlightened by common and universal truth, but abiding under the prejudice of local interests, and in the narrowness of private and personal experience. They are the bigots who, instead of endeavouring to regulate human beings by the universal truths of religion—which are alike truths for all men, for all times, and for all places, being truths of the conscience, which acteth by the reason, and not by the sense—do go about to operate upon men by things seen and temporal; by their present interests, their bodily comforts, their personal fears, and other such narrow and peculiar motives. Therefore, I pray you, for the time to come, to consider the laws of God as true light and true liberty, and to stand up against every thing which would contradict or supercede them, or do without them, as blindness and slavery. The meaning of liberality now-a-days, is to do what pleaseth one's-self, and to leave others to do the like, and at no rate to do what others cannot approve; as if there

were no God—no law of God to direct us, no providence of God appointing us our lots, no intention of God in varying the relationships of human life, that through these symbols, of husband and wife, parent and child, master and servant, he might reveal his own various being and manifold wisdom. One thing I can certainly affirm, that those acts of betrayal, which we have enumerated in the former part of this discourse, will never cease while men are afraid to be considered as illiberal and bigoted because, in all their dealings with their fellow-men, they will be guided by the rule of conscience enlightened by the word and Spirit of God, whether they can see any advantage or shew any profit from doing so. But if you will set God's laws before your face, and walk in the light of his holy commandments, then—I do not say you will be prevented from experiencing treachery, but—I do say, you will be kept from practising it; and when the time comes to consume such an evil system of society, you, who are sighing and crying and suffering under its evils, instead of taking part with them, will be those in whom God will shew forth the glory of his power, either by enabling you to witness unto the death, or by delivering you from the midst of the destruction.

Secondly, I attribute the prevalence of this spirit of treachery to a certain idolatry of what is called Truth, without any respect to the spirit in which it is spoken. Of late years, I

have had occasion frequently to observe the betrayal of personal friendship, the violation of hospitality, the invasion of the most sacred places and usages, which is committed in every publication of a periodical kind—I should rather say, of an entertaining kind, whether periodical or not—by the exposure of private conversations, by the reporting from memory of oral discourse, and founding upon it grave charges; and when I have adverted to enlightened men upon these evils, I have commonly received for answer, ‘Oh, they are but small evils attendant upon a great public good: there can come little harm from making the truth public: truth is great, and will prevail!’ In like manner, when I have oft adverted upon that other mark of the traitorous times in which we live,—the publication by pretended friends of the correspondence of deceased persons, which they never intended should see the light; and the exposure of their frailties, which there was no call to expose—it has been answered to me, ‘If it is true, it is well: the truth, in the long run, will do no evil. I would rather people knew me with my faults, and as I am, than think of me better or otherwise than I am.’ Now, while such views exist concerning the telling of truth, as that it will at any time justify itself by the good which it produceth unto men in general, it is most clear that you do not only take away all let and hindrance to treachery, but do present a very great en-

couragement and inducement thereto ; palliating all its evils ; dignifying it with the nature of a common good ; yea, honouring it with the dignity of a personal sacrifice for the common good. The very worst and basest of the people, the very scum and offscourings of the earth, the vicious and infidel understrappers and hirelings of the press, are justified, by this way of reasoning, for doing daily, and weekly, and monthly, the most horrid violence to all men with whom they have had any intercourse in times past, by retailing, with all the virulence and distortion of an envious and debased mind, those incidents and conversations which, because they were transacted in the confidence of friendship and ought never to have been obtruded upon the world, the much-injured party will rather be content to suffer from, than to expose the modesty of private life, and enter the lists with a self-proclaimed traitor. God will not justify such palliations of wickedness because they put on the disguise of a love of truth. His truth is embodied in a moral law, and the love of his truth proceedeth by the obedience of that holy law. Honesty to our engagements expressed or understood, faithfulness to our plighted truth, integrity, responsibility : these are the soil of truth in the spirit. Truth is only the fruit of a will co-ordinate with the will of God. As pure water proceedeth from a pure fountain in unwearied abundance, so truth proceedeth in plentiful and fruitful streams from a righteous

will. A wicked man cannot tell the truth : he loveth falsehood, and he cannot love the truth. Where are there two words so constantly united in language, as the word false and the word traitor? False traitor, is a true combination of words. Do you expect, then, truth from the mouth of one who, while speaking, is betraying the confidence of a friend, or of a family, or of any trust? I say, Nay : it is only the art by which he administers the poison. He gives you place, time, and person ; and affects to give you the very words ; but he puts into them a traitor's heart, a traitor's interpretation, a traitor's purpose. Nevertheless, it is so pleasing to prurient curiosity to get behind the curtain of modest life ; it is so pleasing to envy and to malice to batten upon the infirmities and errors and frailties of men ; that, if the traitor will but spice his offering with calumny enough, the public, religious or irreligious, at whose shrine he offereth it, will right gladly accept the offering, and give ear unto his suit. Oh! oh! this traitor-loving age of men hath more crime of this kind to answer for, committed within these last thirty years, than any the longest period of which there is any record in the annals of men. There is not one reflection in which I more delight, than that God hath prevented me from betraying the trust of another, by publishing it anonymously unto the world.

The third cause which I find for this prevalence of treachery in all classes of the community,

is ignorance of the principles which bind and unite the various parts of the social fabric : which ignorance to enlighten is the very end of this my vocation ; for I hold that the ground of all preaching is the present fallen condition of man, struggling to erect himself in vain ; and the end of all preaching is, to teach him that Divine help whereby his redemption is made possible, yea, and certain. The redemption of the world, and of man its lord, is already accomplished by the Son of man, and by him the redeemed creation will be yet possessed. We do preach that redemption accomplished, that Redeemer about to come ; and we do preach the Holy Ghost, given, in the mean time, for the sanctification of the conscience of every man who believeth : which sanctification of the conscience doth express itself by a righteous and holy way of fulfilling all the offices and duties of human life. This is morality, even the purified conscience expressing itself in word and deed ; and therefore morality is the true issue of the Holy Ghost abiding in man, and an essential part of all preaching. Now, I have no doubt but this unfaithfulness of trusts, of which we have complained, hath arisen, in a principal degree, from the want of preaching fully out the body of Christian morality, and contenting ourselves with the explanation and the justification of orthodox doctrine against the various heresies which abound. A most important part of the Chris-

tian ministry it is, to defend the Christian faith, which is best done by explaining the faith ; but there is a most fatal notion, that, if only certain sound doctrines be preached and received, the Divine morality may be left to itself. You might as well say that the doctrine might be left to itself. The Divine morality is as much of the Gospel as the Divine doctrine : for the morality is the life, the doctrine is the light of life. The Divine morality is the life of the Holy Ghost, the Divine doctrine is the light which is in Jesus Christ. I am not pleading for moral preaching, but for the preaching of morals as the fruit of the Holy Ghost, most necessary to be taught, and most necessary to be practised. How can the people know their offices, if their offices are not discoursed of ? They will discharge them after a worldly sort, if they be not taught to discharge them after a godly sort. The very circumstance that good works are preached as a ground of justification, is the best reason why they should be preached as the fruits of the Holy Ghost : the true set over against the spurious ; the current made to put the counterfeit to shame. But this is not the case amongst the preachers of the Gospel : either the people will not bear it, or the ministers will not dare it. The consequence is, that religious men, being ignorant of the snares and temptations of Satan, and exposed to the currents, the overwhelming currents of public opinion, are carried along at its pleasure. Add

to this, that the church, as the body of believers incorporated for the holy morality, is not discoursed of at all: the holy border wall, the sacrament of Baptism, is not sanctified at all; its holy bond of charity not opened at all. The end of the Gospel seems now to be a certain impression made upon the mind, rather than a creed honestly believed, and a church piously constituted. And, while the application of religion unto self is the main question handled from the pulpit, what else can we expect than great ignorance upon the offices and trusts of life? Servants err through ignorance, masters err through ignorance, subjects err through ignorance, governors err through ignorance. God may well say again, "My people err through lack of knowledge." God hath taken away our candlestick from its place, and the tabernacle is darkened; and the life, which was nourished by the light, gradually dies out of the church and state. And here I am, night after night, not like an anatomist discoursing in the theatre upon the disease of which the patient hath died, but like a son pointing out to a most unnatural, light-hearted, unbelieving family, the signs of decay in the mother's countenance, and the seeds of death in the mother's frame. For a church is not in life but by the Holy Ghost dwelling in her; and wherein the Holy Ghost dwelleth, therein are all the works of light, and the fruits of light. Ignorance, therefore, deep, dark, gloomy, and confirmed ignorance, is

a great cause of the betrayal of the trusts and offices which I have opened in the former part of my discourse.

Now, the fourth and last which I will mention, is positive unbelief. There is a hard scepticism, which hath indurated men's hearts, so as they will not feel the impression of a truly spiritual consideration. They either will not, or they cannot, believe a thing, unless common opinion sanction it, or immediate advantage attend upon it. You may try your utmost—at least, I know I have done it oft—with religious people, but it was in vain: no truth, for its own sake, could I get them to believe. I have made the same experiment upon publicans and sinners—to felons—and they have wept under the power of it. But, no: religious people are not that way to be impressed: they suspect you for a wolf, if you will not enter the sheepfold by the door of some notable favourite; or, rather—seeing it hath but one door, which is Christ—if you do not climb its walls upon the shoulders of some one whose voice they love with what love they should love the good Shepherd only. If these things were not true, I ought to be broken upon the wheel for daring to utter them; but I believe in God, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that they are true. I believe that the spirit of infidelity—or as it is called, expediency—hath destroyed the very capacity of believing; and that the end of it will be a Pharisaical order in

the Protestant church, which will be found the most hateful to, the most obstinately set against, the simplicity of the truth as it is in Jesus. And again I say, if these things be not so, I should be burnt at the stake for having dared to utter them; but if they be so, then God be praised, who hath given me grace both to perceive and utter them. Oh, why should I not declare in the bosom of God's church what I constantly fear, and never cease to grieve over; grieving most of all because I grieve not enough! It is time the church of Christ should know the hardness of the heart of those who consider themselves the upholders of the faith and look down with supercilious pity upon all besides themselves. Those who speak about their pure communions, and brand us of the Established Churches as if we were synagogues of Satan, I have found to be in my arms like the blast of the bitter North, which freezes the life of the traveller. If it be purity, it is the purity of the mountain snow, which never yields to the influence of the sun. Questions of money, questions of sect and party, questions of private jealousy and slander, questions of worldly interest and dignity in the state, will set them all on fire; but questions concerning the eternal principles of faith and morals, concerning the absolute laws of the redeemed will, and the necessary bonds and obligations of charity in the church, fail to move one throb or pulse of their heart. These are the causes, the deep-

seated, and I dread incurable, causes of that disease whereof I have been exhibiting the various evil symptoms. And now, my dear brethren, who are patient to hear the evil, and the causes of the evil, be patient for a few moments longer, while I explain to you in a few words the cure of it.

The opposite of treachery, is faithfulness; and faithfulness is only the fulness of faith: therefore we ought to rest assured, that faith in God, through Jesus Christ, is the only remedy of the evil in the text. Faith is the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for: expediency is the evidence of things seen, and the substance of things possessed. The one upholdeth the laws of conscience, the other upholdeth the laws of sight; and as the invisible world is opposite to the visible, Christ being the possessor of the one and Satan of the other, it is clear that these two, faith and expediency, will lead to an opposite life and conversation. Now, the Christian is to walk by faith, and not by sight: if, therefore, by faith ye will lay hold upon the laws and ordinances of God, and obey them in the spirit, ye may rest assured that for no outward bribe or inducement will you be led to violate the trusts of this present life. Servants will know what it is to obey for conscience, and not for fear; how thank-worthy it is even to endure reproof wrongously, for Christ's sake; and, instead of disappointing the expectations, even of worldly masters, they

will pass beyond them, and prove witnesses in behalf of Christ; feeling it very honourable that they have been called in the form of a servant, as was their Lord. Believing that God hath a holy end to serve in calling them so, they prefer it unto every other calling, and rejoice in God their Saviour. The same say I of every other relationship of life: faith doth defend it, and faith alone is capable of defending it, from the temptations to treachery which Satan interposeth on every hand. Look, therefore, dear brethren, to the recompence of reward; not unto the things which are seen and temporal, but unto the things which are unseen and eternal: and, being filled with the infinite good which awaiteth all believers in the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, you will not be tempted from your allegiance by any temptations which things seen can present. Is it meat and drink? then will ye say, "Man liveth not by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Is it dignities? then you will say, "Get thee behind me, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Is it spiritual presumption? then you will say, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." By such means as those which are presented to us in the Holy Scripture; by the fear of God's punishments, and by the hope of his rewards; by the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the power of the Holy

Ghost, and by the obedience of God, who is the great Father and Master and Lord of all ; we shall come—and otherwise we shall not come—unto a redemption from the evil spirit of the last times, which is now spread abroad throughout the church. Unto which blessed estate that we may all arrive, may the Lord of his infinite mercy grant ! and to his name shall be the praise.

SERMON XIV.

HEADY, HIGH-MINDED.

2 TIM. iii. 1, 4.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be heady, high-minded.

THESE two characteristics of the last times I join together, not because they are less distinct, less true, or less capable of illustration from, and application to, the times in which we live; but because there now remain to me only two Sabbaths, besides this, before I shall be called from my stated labours in this place for a few weeks, and I would not leave this subject uncompleted before my departure. Yet are the two characteristics very much akin to one another: the former expressing haste, and precipitancy, and unstayedness; the latter pointing the direction which this turbulent and restless spirit assumeth, upwards, towards a higher station, through thoughts of vanity, rather than any honourable ambition, or love of a more extended influence. The former—that you may be enabled to judge for yourselves—is

used Acts xix. 36, where the town-clerk of Ephesus would appease the tumult of the people, saying, "Seeing, then, that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing *rashly*," precipitately, violently, or head-foremost. Now, besides this application of it to rash and violent proceedings, it is also applied, by classical writers, and in the Greek version of the Old Testament, to hasty and unguarded speeches: as in Prov. x. 14, "Wise men lay up knowledge, but the mouth of the foolish," or *rash*, "is near destruction." And again, Prov. xiii. 3, in the same sense: "He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life, but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction."

Now, concerning the duty of a Christian, in respect both to his words and actions, it is never to be doubted, that while, above all things, truth and righteousness are to be pursued, haste and rashness are diligently to be guarded against; for the reason that we are naturally prone to that which is evil, and slow to that which is good. First thoughts are, in general, like the scum of any mixture, the fullest of impurities; especially in minds naturally of an excitable and unquiet temper—and all such should especially be upon their guard neither to speak nor to act upon the spur of the moment. The wisdom that is from above is peaceable and gentle. See how often Peter, from his forwardness, subjected himself both to shame

and to rebuke. See what an excellent lesson of calm, firm, and unaltered dignity our Lord giveth to all his disciples, upon every occasion where he was violently or insidiously attacked. You know what parts of a man are the readiest to rouse themselves: his fears, his temper, his passions, his worldly and personal interests. Now these are the worst possible counsellors: fear magnifies things out of all proportion; temper agitates and irritates the mind, and prevents it from reflection; passions either blind or infuriate us; and personal worldly interests cast a dark eclipse over charity and faith, and things unseen and eternal. A wise and good man should, like a calm judge, hear these contentious parties; but separate himself from their contentions, and consult only with equity and righteousness. Seeing, moreover, that it is from God that all wise counsels, good thoughts, and righteous actions proceed, we ought, before expressing or enacting any sudden impulse, to wait, and consult the Oracle and Spirit of God, who, for his quietness, is likened unto the gentle dove. From hasty words proceed quarrels, scoldings, and contentions. Offences sink deep into tender spirits, and require many words to restore harmony again. How many lives have been sacrificed by a hasty word! I might say, that nine out of ten of all the duels which disgrace Christian nations proceed from words uttered in haste. Right truly is it said in Holy Writ, "The wrath of man

worketh not the righteousness of God." And again, it is well advised, "that we should be slow to speak, and swift to hear." And for nothing doth the Apostle rebuke the Corinthian church so much, as for their haste and hurry to express the revelations which they received from God, saying, "How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation." And this he accounteth a great defect of understanding; saying, "Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit, in malice be ye children, but in understanding be ye men." And therefore he dischargeth women altogether from speaking in the churches, as judging that they were more quick and susceptible of impressions, and therefore not so apt to wisdom and understanding.

Dearly beloved brethren, let not any one of you, therefore, rashly conclude that any thing which is vividly and strongly presented unto your minds is therefore from the Lord. Satan doth transform himself into an angel of light: we have spiritual wickednesses to contend with. All heresies, all blasphemies, come from the mind acted upon by the influence of Satan: he suiteth his temptation to every man's conditions: a good man is not by his goodness removed from his assaults, neither a wise man by his wisdom; but only a man who is ever full of faith and of the Spirit of holiness. The

greatest errors have been brought into the church by the unguardedness of the best of men. Indeed, for what end is spiritual light given, but to contend against spiritual darkness? A saint is strengthened only that he may endure the more, and overcome the more. Wherefore, dear brethren, count not yourselves to have already attained unto this grace whereof I discourse, or to be already perfected in the gift of wise discourse, or of righteous and deliberate action. Of which of you can it be said, as it was said of the Lord, "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself unto Him that judgeth righteously?" And, again, to which of you can these words, descriptive of charity, be applied: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up . . . beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things?" Or which of us hath profited enough in the grace which Paul commendeth unto Timothy and every man of God, saying: "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men; apt to teach; patient; meekly instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure may give them repentance unto the acknowledgment of the truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will?" I find no cause so frequently assigned for those

gainsayings and withstandings of wicked men, by which the Apostle was so much hindered, as this hastiness and headiness of mind. Of those who would not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he saith, that "they are proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions, and strifes, and words; whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds." The word translated "he is proud," in this passage, is the same as the word "high-minded" in the text; and it is laid as the foundation of all discontent with sound doctrine, of all strivings and railings against the truth. In like manner, in giving the qualifications of a bishop, the same word is used in this passage: "Not a novice, lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the snare of the devil." And that this resistance of the truth, out of corruption of the mind, and folly, was in the Apostle's eye in the passage before us, is manifest from the 8th and 9th verses of the chapter, where it is written, "Now, as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men corrupted in their mind, reprobate," or, rather, of no judgment, "concerning the faith."

This new feature of character, being added to the former, gives me an intellectual characteristic of the last times which I perceive at present rapidly revealing itself; which is, a

readiness to judge all points of holy doctrine by the hasty impression of our own mind. Instead of inquiring what the church hath thought upon such and such a point—as the sacraments, for example, or the person of Christ—instead of patiently trying the matter by the testimony of Holy Scripture; the manner and custom of these times is, for every man at once to instal himself judge, without ever inquiring his competency of knowledge or of character; and, with a rapid, hasty act, to cast it away, most commonly with ridicule and contempt. This is the high-mindedness spoken of in the text: which is a word whose root signifies “smoke;” as if pride and pomp were only the smoke of a mind which was not yet kindled into any brightness of knowledge or heat of love. It is taken indiscriminately, by Greek authors, to denote ignorance and inflation, inexperience and headiness of mind, a fool or a volatile person; because the two qualities always go together. Ignorance and inflatedness is the proper expression: for the word high-minded is too good to represent the idea conveyed by the original: indeed, the best word is that which we have derived from the Latin word signifying smoke, —one that fumes up, like a new-kindled fire; one that bubbles up, like fermenting liquor: the opposite of which is clear light of understanding, and warmth of heart; the wine of wisdom, wine upon the lees well refined. And, like all the other characteristics contained in the text, it

is a word whose root signifies “smoke;” as if pride and pomp were only the smoke of a mind which was not yet kindled into any brightness of knowledge or heat of love.

belongs to the type of intellectual infidelity, being the accompaniment of an intellect which hath not condescended nor waited to be informed and directed by the Holy Spirit. And so common is it, especially amongst young men, that they fancy themselves fit for any office, and equal to any undertaking. It is opposed to learning, which treasureth up the stores of knowledge, in order to form the grounds of judgment. It is opposed to reflection and meditation upon the knowledge which we possess. It seeks to undervalue these, for the observation of things present, and the utterance of things felt, and the invention of things expedient. And, in religion, it sets at nought every bulwark of the true faith reared up by holy men against the forms of error which Satan hath from time to time engendered by the means of such hasty and heady men. It is even indifferent to the articles and constitutions of the church to which it may chance to be bound by solemn covenants. Oh, it saith, give me the word of God, and away with your creeds, confessions, articles, and all such bondages. Well, you take them at their word, and travel with them in the Holy Scriptures; and what say they then? Oh, the Old Testament is no longer binding on us; or, There is no profit from perusing its prophecies; and for the Psalms, they must be modernized, or give way to spiritual songs made by eminent saints: and, saving certain pretty stories, concerning Joseph, and Moses, and little Samuel, the rest is not spiritual. Well, you take them at their

word again, and come to the New Testament ; and what find you ? The Revelations are an unblest book ; the Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles, of a secondary importance : but the Epistles, ah ! the Epistles ; these are the precious treasures of a Christian ; out of which twenty texts are taken for one taken from any other place. Well, again you take them at their word, and travel with them in the Epistles, and find many arguments founded upon the Old Testament, and many quotations from the Prophets, and many forewarnings of a mystery of iniquity to brood over, work in, and finally suffocate the church ; and many other passages you do find, referring to the advent and kingdom of our Lord ; but these are passed by, as if they signified nothing. And if you would say, ‘ Nay, but what saith the Spirit here ? and what doth the Spirit intend ? ’ they answer you, ‘ It is not for edification ! ’ Unto whom I answer, ‘ Thou speakest of the devil, and not of God : “ get thee behind me, Satan.” ’ These worshippers of the written word and despisers of all creeds, are then, after all, the greatest despoilers of the word ; picking and culling what they can enter into at a glance ; and, with less concern than they would the word of a man, casting all the rest to the moles and to the bats—that is, to the dust of obscurity and the mist of darkness. After all, they turn out to be worshippers of themselves ; hastily approving and hastily rejecting ; heady and high-minded ; deeming themselves to be worthy of more love

and estimation than the most famous and venerable men of God's church, yea, than the Scriptures themselves.

Having early seen the presence of this irreverent, unenlightened, uncharitable spirit, and, with the rest of my competitors and companions, felt within myself the evil effects of it, I have been brought the more earnestly to contend against it, both in myself and in others. But with grief have I to say, that it is so rooted in the spirit of the times, that it is so much of the essence and substance of liberality, and that it groweth so necessarily out of the influence of public opinion, that in very few instances indeed, beyond the range of those who wait constantly upon my ministry, have I been able to prevail against it. For example: I have for the last three years sought to convince religious and pious people, that the view of baptism contained in their own standards, which also they were daily ministering or hearing ministered, is the very truth of God: but, from their constant appeal to their first impressions; from their want of patience to enter into the nature of the church; from their want of modest diffidence, and gentle, courteous audience, I have hardly ever been able to succeed. And now I see the same warfare arising with respect to the person of Christ. The soil will not carry the same seed as heretofore. It is vain to sow it with wheat; you must sow it with a lighter grain. There may still be gleaned some whole-

some fruits from it, fit for the lower forms of creation; but its faculty of fruit-bearing for God and for Christ is almost gone. Oh! such an understanding, so powerless, so profitless, hath possessed the times in which we live, I think we shall never again build up any works of wisdom or of godliness. The time is come to cast down, and it is no longer the time to build. It is no longer the time to gather stones, but to cast stones away. Aye, truly spake Solomon, that "there is a time for every thing under the sun;" and God hath cast our lot in the last and perilous times, wherein men set at nought the wisdom and seek to demolish the works of their fathers.

Furthermore: This characteristic of headiness and high-mindedness resteth not in the mind merely which judgeth, but goeth out into the actions of men; where we find a restlessness, speculation, and love of change; a haste to bring about our ends; a discontentment with our conditions; a pressing upward and forward into the high places of life, which more, perhaps, than any thing else, distresseth the spirit and betrayeth the trust and wrecketh the peace of men. Until these years of revolution, these infidel times, whose characteristics we are seeking to disclose, men set themselves down in a certain condition of life—tradesmen, shopkeepers, merchants, or other—and proposed to their minds the honest and good purpose of rearing up a family orderly and de-

cently, and as became the stations of their fathers; being content if they could keep their credit, maintain their family, and settle them creditably in the world. This was the common undertaking of men in the last generation; and being so, there was neither the drudgery nor yet the luxury which now prevaileth. Men had rest: the labour of winter was not like the labour of spring or harvest; but it was a breathing-time, and a resting-time, to man as to nature: and I have heard the old people of my native town tell, how they would pass their day now and then in sports and recreations, and their evening in tale and song and conversation of various kinds, which kept man in remembrance of his higher parts. But now, every man, through this spirit of high-mindedness which hath seized every rank, is become either a drudge and slave to labour and business, or a speculator for risks manifold, or a consumer of more wealth than would have kept a dozen families in the former times: all either drudges, or rich men; insomuch, that, to refer back to my own experience and land of nativity, it hath been proposed in some places to take away from the people the rest of the fast-day before the sacrament, because it is so much time lost from labour.

Now, from what else proceedeth this intensity of care, this oppression of labour, this restlessness of speculation—from which a single man cannot escape, even if he would—but from

a visitation at God's hand of this heady and ambitious spirit contained in the text? That hereditary wisdom, those maxims of good sense and principles of upright conduct, which answer the same end in the business of the world that sound creeds and good canons of discipline do in the church, have, in the spirit of hasty and uncontrouled self-will, which is the operative and constituting principle whereof these characteristics are the outward features, been all cast away, as belonging to the old school, obsolete prejudices, and essential obstructions to the freedom of man's actions: and so, like water which hath borne down its banks, it shoots away at its own liberty, and overspreads with an inundation, and drowns all the works of men. These evils begin in the church, Satan always putting forth his main effort there. In the church it began with the Methodism of Wesley and Whitfield; which, however well meant, and overruled for good, yea, and productive of good, did introduce into the church a new era of thinking and feeling with respect to the transmitted and embodied wisdom of our fathers. The obligation of the sacraments began to be forgotten in the work of conversion, and hath never since been recalled to mind. The information of doctrine and morals, and, in one word, the Divine wisdom, which was wont to be embodied in preaching, passed away for quick and lively appeals to the present feelings of men, addresses to their interests, pre-

sentations to their love of pleasure, food to their appetite of excitement; which continueth likewise unto this day: so that there is no longer any laying up in store by Christians, but they live from hand to mouth, or hang upon the breasts of their famished teachers, and reduce them, or are by them reduced, to mere skeletons, consisting only of skin and bone. I do not know whether the lean ears may not have eaten up all that remained of the plentiful years that were before them: I rather suspect it will be found so: but this I know, that if any soul would prosper in its health, and grow strong and mighty, it must be on its guard against the precipitancy and high-mindedness mentioned in the text; become patient of doctrine; desirous of learning; humble in respect to self, and thinking better of others than of itself; reverent towards the ordinances of God, and especially towards the ordinance of preaching; desirous to be instructed in the foundations on which the true church from the beginning hath been built; and, in short, guarding against the utterance of first thoughts and the excitement of first impressions, and delighting in the tranquillity of meditation, in the communion and fellowship of love, and in the continual utterance of prayer.

Now, if it should so please God to forget our manifold unspeakable sins as a church; to turn away his face from our present ugliness and wickedness, and to restore us our Sabbaths

and our Sabbath devotions, our sacraments and our sacramental food and raiment, as at the first : if it should please him to grant unto the ministers of the church the word of wisdom, and unto the people the hearing of faith, and revive us in the midst of the days : then we may both hope, and certainly believe, that in the spirit of the people and nation in general—which yet is the church in covenant, though lying under the guilt of a covenant broken—there will be experienced a revival of that fear of God and reverence of his ordinances which exalt a nation ; and an abatement of that headiness and high-mindedness, which, like a sudden blast, hath driven the vessels from their moorings, and set them a-jostling with one another. I know not, dear brethren, what you may feel with respect to this turmoil into which the classes of society are thrown ; this unrest, which, like the evil spirit from the Lord that troubled Saul, will not suffer us to be at peace ; but for myself I will say, that I would rather, if I could, possess the calm, stedfast character which in the last age, and the age before it, pertained to a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland ; his grave spirit, his judicious counsel ; his plain, honest, straight-forward exposition of God's word, with all the other characteristics of a conscientious, faithful minister of Christ and pastor of the people ;—A year of such a life, of such an unknown and noiseless life, I feel it were more noble to pos-

sess, than to rule the ascendant of public opinion, and to ride upon the unsettled waves of this heady and high-minded generation. I will labour for it; I will find my way back to it, if it be possible: and I would advise every man who hears me, as he values his own peace, to do the same; to seek quietness, to desire peace, to dwell with truth, to ensue it diligently. Let them hunt riches who please; let them haste to be rich who please, and drain out the very life of their soul in anxious cares and laborious charges: let them court observation who please, and love to live in heartless and hollow forms of life and of feeling; or, if not to live in them, to live upon them, panting after them from a distance, and adoring them from afar, and reading the unfruitful and unholy words which tell of them—that is, the unholy scriptures of periodical publications; which have filled the veins of men, not with life-blood, but with garbage; and filled their heads with smoke of man's opinions, and not with light of wisdom:—I say unto you, dearly beloved brethren, and to myself, let us not follow the multitude in this evil course, but be content with such things as you have. If God hath called you to be servants, glorify him, in enduring meekly the wrongs and contumelies, if such should come; the labours of thankless masters, if such should come; remembering that ye have Christ for an example, who took upon him the form of a servant, and, though a Son, learned obedience through suffering. If

ye be workmen, then be contented, and serve your masters faithfully; remembering the rest that remaineth for the people of God; setting your house in order, and delighting yourselves in your wives and your little ones, and teaching them to worship and fear the Lord. Is your calling, again, appointed of God—for nothing happeneth unto any man but of God's appointment, for his own glory and our own good—in the higher sphere of a master, a tradesman, or a merchant? I say then, be not heady and high-minded, listening to every scheme of speculation, and hunting after every opening of gain; but go on quietly, doing the day's business faithfully and diligently, and trusting the Lord for to-morrow; remembering the word of the Lord, "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." While you labour diligently, aye, slavishly, that you may be burdensome to no one, but provide well for your household, yea, and may have wherewithal to help the poor and the needy; set not your affections upon earthly grandeur, or worldly riches, which drown the soul in perdition, and pierce the heart through with many sorrows. Say, and vow unto the Lord, that you will not, for all which the world containeth—for its kingdoms, and the glory of them—bow down and worship Satan. Remember, your wives and children, and your household servants, have more than mouths to be fed and bodies to be clothed; even minds to be informed, hearts to be comforted, spirits

to be guided in the worship and service of God. Be high-minded here. This indeed is to be high-minded in the righteous sense. Compared with this, what is the table covered with dainties, the person covered with broidery, or the house filled with elegancies and works of art? Will these redeem a soul? will these convert an unawakened member of Christ? will these fulfil your baptismal vows? will these stand instead of parents' prayers at the throne of God?

Ah, brethren, the times are very evil; the days are very perilous unto us all. I would it were not so; but we have well deserved the evil at the Lord's hand. The Lord is righteous; yea, the Lord is merciful and gracious, who hath not utterly extinguished us, and put us out from being a nation. But, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, God never leaveth himself without a witness; his church will not be prevailed against by all the gates of hell. Though the spirits from the mouth of the dragon, and from the mouth of the beast, and from the mouth of the false prophet, be all flown abroad, there is a word, a word of power, which can preserve the church. And what is that word of mighty power? It is not that with which Christ withstood Satan's first assault, "Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word of God." That word might be proper to the church in her first ages, when she was driven from house and home by the persecutions of paganism. Nor is it that word which with-

stood and defeated Satan's second temptation, when he tempted the Lord with the kingdoms of the world and the glories of them : " Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve : " which might be proper, as some have thought, to the second period of the church, when she was tempted with the co-fraternity and co-habitation of that power of the kings of the earth with which heretofore they had afflicted her. Nor is it that word with which he defeated the third temptation of Satan, beguiling him to take liberties with the word of God, and to wrest it unto his own convenient uses : " Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God : " and which may well be thought proper to the third, or Protestant, age of the church, during which, and amongst whom, the word of God hath been made the tool of the human intellect, to answer the expedient interests and temporary ends of men. No : these three words, which were powerful to meet each its proper and several temptation of Satan, are not able to meet and to overcome the combined and confederated attempts of the three spirits which have gone forth together from the mouth of the dragon, and of the beast, and of the false prophet. And what, then, is that word of mightiest power, which is to prove the bulwark of the church against the gates of hell ? The Lord himself hath told it in its place, where the procession of these three evil spirits is declared : for no sooner had the seer seen them go

forth, than there was lifted up this voice in his hearing; "Behold, I come as a thief: blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments; lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." I believe this spirit of the last times, which is the combined mixture and expressed strength of all the others—violence, seduction, and delusion—can be resisted by that mighty word, "Behold, I come!" The faith of this word will prevail to establish the foundations, in these perilous times, against the gates of hell. This I believe: and I believe, moreover, that no other word will prevail to do it. And the thing which stirs my hope is, that this truth is now preached unto this nation: and the thing that stirs my fears is, that it findeth welcome with so few. Nevertheless, if you be appointed to salvation, the Lord's will be done. I would rather that it had been many; but, the Lord's will be done.

While I thus speak, brethren, I do not mean that only those who believe in the Second Advent can be saved. God forbid! but I mean, that they only whose eye is lifted up from the reeling and changing face of things as they are now seen in the church, and fixed upon a deliverance about to come, shall find the deliverance when it comes. Nor need I to speak prophetically in this matter, but from the fact—the fact—which truly is, that all men whom I converse with, or hear of, excepting only those who have been brought to see the times in the light of prophecy, are taken, without almost a

single exception, in the snare of liberality. The most orthodox ministers of our own church, the most spiritual of the Evangelical, and the most zealous of the Dissenters, are, though they may not intend it, really and truly the most able abettors and the most efficient co-operators of the Infidel and Socinian party in the land. Is it education without religion? is it a university without the name of Christ? Among these, the Orthodox and Evangelical, it is cried up. Is it the opening of power and of office without any religious question of any kind, so that the infidel may sail into the port with all his sails set?—which I hold to be the wickedest thing that can be done by a Christian people—still it is from the same classes that it meeteth its most energetic support. I say not, advisedly, or designedly: God forbid! I say not, to the loss of their own souls: but I do say, through the blindness of their mind and the intoxication of Satan's cup, and to the exceeding great vexation of God's holy and righteous Spirit. Now, perceiving this to be a constant truth, prevailing against the minds of the best and most stedfast of men; and perceiving that men much their inferiors in years and standing in the church, do at once, upon the knowledge of Christ's coming, and the mysteries of Babylon's downfall and infidelity's prevalence, therewith connected, at once get delivered from the spell of liberality, and see the true nature of that cup—of which no man

had drunk more deeply than myself—and see, not the beastly forms, for that was proper to the Papacy, but the vain, pompous, heady and high-minded, and, in one word, aspiring, forms unto which men have been changed by the powerful spell of Satan:—what can a man do, who sees and is convinced of these things, but believe, and declare with all faithfulness, as I now do, that if it be so at this time of day, when the battle is hardly entered upon, how shall it be when the heat of the battle beareth upon the church in all its strength? And who shall be able to stand out to the end of the day? If even now the standard-bearers are fainting; if even now the standard-bearers counsel submission, and have submitted to Satan's summons before the battle; if the mere rumour from the enemy's camp hath made them faint-hearted; if the fear of the public opinion hath turned their hearts to lead, and all men counsel submission—save a few, who know of a mighty succour to be afforded, and a mighty Deliverer about to come—What can we say? Or what can we do, but go about the camp, which is the church, and stir up the servants of the King to be of a stout heart, because the King himself will come unto their head; and not to be dismayed because their standard-bearers faint, but to receive the word of the King when he let these hostile spirits loose, which word is, “Behold, I come?” To tell the soldiers in the strength of this word to bide the onset, and

to be assured of deliverance? Yea, though all but a few should turn unto their homes; though, like Gideon's company, they should be reduced to but three hundred men; still to trust in the name, and in the power, and in the appearance, and in the promised succour, and in the assured deliverance of the mighty God—the “El-gebor”—which is the God of battles: according as it is written, Isaiah x. 21; “The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God.”

Therefore, dear brethren, I am constrained anew to exhort every one of you, as the only defence which I know of against the compromising and accommodating spirit now in the church, which will sacrifice every great principle of doctrine, and every great bulwark of discipline, to a mere expedient, to search into the Scriptures, and see if you cannot attain unto the belief of the Lord's speedy coming. Do it in the spirit of humility and of faith. Call it not a dogma of men; call it not the mania of a few men; but see if it be not in Holy Scripture the banner of the church's hopes. Therefore, I pray you, if in any thing I have been able to set before you the disease of the times, to treat me as you would do a physician who has shewn himself skilful to understand your complaint, and give some heed to the remedy which I here propound; the only remedy that hath availed in my own case; the only remedy that hath availed in the case of

all my friends, who have been delivered from the plague, the air-born and breath-inhaled infection of liberality : which remedy is, that it is the last time, and that the Lord is about to appear. And yet not my remedy, but the remedy of the Lord, inserted on very purpose, at the time of the gathering of the people to Armageddon by the three spirits : “ Behold, I come ! blessed is he that watcheth.”

SERMON XV.

LOVERS OF PLEASURES MORE (RATHER) THAN
LOVERS OF GOD.

2 TIM. iii. 1, 4.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be.....lovers of pleasures more (rather) than lovers of God.

IT is written, in the First Epistle of John (ii. 15—17), “ Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him : for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof : but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” And, again, it was said by our Lord unto his disciples : “ If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.....If ye were of the world, the world would love his own ; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” These two passages of Holy

Writ form the best commentary upon our text, wherein the love of pleasure is set in opposition to the love of God, and the Christians of the last time are declared to prefer the worse unto the better part. Concerning this opposition—between pleasures, which the Apostle John divideth into three classes, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; and declareth to be of the world, and not of God; which world, again, the Lord declareth doth hate and persecute his disciples—concerning this opposition, I say, between the love of sensual worldly pleasures and the love of God, if we inquire diligently, we shall find that it hath its origin in the subjection of all visible things unto vanity or folly, in consequence of the curse of God imposed upon all things at the fall. From which it hath come to pass that Satan is the governor and head, and man the subject, brought under his wicked dominion. Wherefore he is said “to rule in the children of disobedience” (Eph. ii. 1); and to “possess the kingdoms of the earth, and the glory of them” (Matt. iv.) Sin hath introduced into our flesh a law which is contrary to the law of the Spirit of God: as it is written; “I feel a law in my members warning against the law of my mind;” which is “not subject unto the law of God, neither indeed can be.” And again it is written; “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, blasphemies, adulteries, fornications, murders.” It is not to be doubted, therefore, that sin hath made that

to be pleasant unto the flesh which is forbidden by the law of God. From which impurity it is the end of Baptism to deliver us: therefore the Apostle, having opened the mystery of baptism, doth (Rom. vi. 11) entreat the baptized to reckon themselves "to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ the Lord. Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof; neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead; and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." These declarations of holy Scripture, confirmed by the initiatory rite of the Christian church, do sufficiently shew that there is a natural and rooted antipathy between the fleshly part of man and the law of God: and that it is no acquired habit, no mere principle of imitation, no propensity which errs only by excess, but a rooted and infixed, and I may say in-irradicable, law of our nature, to love and desire and delight in what is evil, and not in what is good. Indeed, what is sin, but this very condition of preferring evil unto good? Sin is not a being, it is not a creature; but the condition of a creature: and as holiness expresseth the condition of the creature which is right with God, and beareth a love to him continually; so doth sin represent the condition of a creature which is not right with God, nor beareth love unto him at all. That, therefore, which is

naturally pleasant unto us, will be found to be contrary to the Lord God. Wherefore, in becoming religious we deny ourselves, we are crucified unto the flesh, and unto the world: the grace of God, which hath appeared unto all men, teacheth us, that, "denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in a present evil world."

If any one doubt or disbelieve this great principle of Divine revelation, he hath only to reflect upon himself and upon the world, in order to be disabused of his error. Look, for example, at a child, in which there are as yet revealed no desires of the flesh, save those of taste; and behold what need there is on the part of the mother for restraint and denial, and very soon for correction also. Behold the youth: what constant need of discipline, and of threatening, and of chastisement! insomuch that it should be taken in Scripture as the proof of a parent's love and of a child's true nativity that it receiveth its proper share of correction: "What son is he whom the father chasteneth not? If ye receive not chastisement, then are ye bastards, and not sons." "We have had fathers of our flesh, who corrected us, and we gave them reverence." Again, if we consider the estate of opening manhood: how oft that strength, which should be husbanded for a laborious life of well-doing, is exhausted, in intemperance of various kinds, faster than it can arise, and restrained

in most cases only by weakness and disease—I may say, in all cases, where the grace of God is not present, and where the means of indulgence are supplied: insomuch, that to withhold the means of indulgence is considered by all wise parents one of the greatest points of duty towards children. If, again, you consider laws, how they bank in the overflowings of a man's natural inclinations; and how the decencies and decorums, and other forms of life, do the same; you will perceive at once, that there is in mankind in general a disposition to indulge their pleasures beyond what even man can endure; that the love of pleasure is contrary, not only to the love of God, but likewise to the love of our brother, and even to our own well-being.

Some will argue, that it is only the excess of pleasure, and the immoderateness of enjoyment, which makes it evil, but that pleasure in itself is good and desirable; and that it is no argument against a thing, that it is pleasant; nor argument for it, that it is unpleasant. There is here a very nice point of morality and divinity, to which we shall endeavour to give heed. Pleasure is not, and cannot be, removed from things naturally pleasant; in which the godly man hath the same, generally a greater, pleasure than the ungodly man, because he partaketh of them within proper bounds. It is the great error of the ascetic life, to abstain from things merely because they are pleasant, and on that account to separate from society and live

alone; to deny the body its wholesome and pleasant food, yea, and to inflict severities upon it; to abstain from the enjoyments of domestic life; with whatever else is condemned by the Apostle under "will-worship, voluntary humility, and denial of the body;" and which hath been perfected by Papists in their monastic way of life. Of all this the evil consisteth not in a false idea of the law of the flesh, but a false method of its cure. These are wanderings of the mind, under the deep conviction of the evil we have set forth above, ineffectual wanderings, to find in nature any remedy for the evil of nature. This hermit life, severe unto itself, which in all religions and in all moral systems hath found a place, and generally the highest place—as, for example, the Cynics and Stoics, the Fakirs, the Dervishes, the Pharisees, and the Monks—doth prove how deeply seated is the conviction in mankind that there is natural evil and disease in the flesh, which pleasure and gratification doth feed, and which self-denial and abstinence doth starve: as saith the poet; "Spare fast, that with the gods doth diet." And though it is now the use and wont to laugh at all these forms of human character, and to treat them as hypocrisy or folly, it ought never to be forgotten, that if in these seclusions and severities much mysticism hath been produced, and much hypocrisy practised, there also much devotion, deep thought, learning and philosophy, and

saint-like righteousness, have held their seats and kept their vigils. But, as I said, while it confirmeth, by the common consent of the best and wisest men, the maxim of our text, that the love of pleasure is opposite to the love of God, we are willing to allow that it applyeth a wrong remedy, and seeketh to cast out Beelzebub by Beelzebub. It affecteth to find in the wilderness, or in the cell, or in the food and raiment of the body, or in a regular canon of life, or in some other device of human wisdom, a remedy for that evil, which by human wisdom may be somewhat abated, but by the Holy Spirit alone can be overcome; because a man can never flee from himself. Death alone can make the flesh to cease from sin: while it liveth, it liveth under the bondage of corruption; and never, until the baptismal regeneration of fire, shall it rise pure and incorruptible. The hairy girdle, the chain of cold iron, the shirt of sackcloth, the bed of stone or of thorns or of iron spikes, cannot do for human flesh that office which the power of the resurrection alone will perform. Inasmuch, therefore, as these substitute the inventions of man for the regeneration and work of the Spirit, or make these too prominent, to the hiding of this, they are greatly to be blamed. I speak not now of their wickedness, as the great nursery, and I may say manufactory, of human merits, because this point is not before us. These inventions prove that there may be a love of severi-

ties, as well as a love of pleasures, opposite to the love of God. There is another error, which cometh of this system of ascetic morals; that, by separating a particular outward order of life, it doth in a measure not only give a sanction to this, as if it were holy in itself; but also it fixeth a stigma upon the secular way of life, as if it were necessarily unholy, and could not otherwise be mastered but by fleeing out of the midst of it. There was common and holy while the Jewish religion stood; which made this separation, not for the end of calling the separated part holy in itself, but for the end of shewing the whole lump to be unholy: now, however, that the body of Christ hath holiness in itself, and as such hath appeared in the holy presence of God for us; and now that the Holy Ghost from his risen body hath proceeded forth, in order to sanctify our sinful bodies, and give us that victory over the devil, the world, and the flesh, which Christ achieved; it is wholly to cast us back upon the beggarly elements and carnal ordinances, thus to suppose an invincible and insuperable power remaining in any person, place, or thing, for which it ought to be fled away from, instead of being, by the power of Christ's risen body, withstood and conquered there where it standeth.

And thus at length have we come to the true divinity, and likewise to the true morality, of the question before us—which is, that, though there be in the flesh a desire and a lust, which,

being by the evil spirit of Satan inflamed, and by all things visible fed and nourished, doth operate directly against the light of reason, the liberty of the will, and the well-pleasing of God; so that a man by nature cannot do the things which he would: yet is there also a power of the body of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost thence proceeding, whereunto every Christian is baptized, which is able effectually to resist and overcome the evil inherent in the flesh of man, the power exercised by the devil, and the deception residing in the visible world; which is able to keep a man holy in all conditions of life, in all places, in the midst of all pleasures, and in the enjoyment of all possessions. Now, the love of pleasures, spoken of in the text, consisteth in the love of what is pleasant merely on its own account, because it is pleasant, without any discernment of its procession from a sinful origin and its tendency to a sinful end. It is not the enjoyment of that which ministers to enjoyment, and which God hath given to be enjoyed as his good creatures; but it is the enjoyment of it without any acknowledgment of its Giver, without any thanksgiving for the gift, without any piety in the use, without any religion in the dispensation of it unto others: but, above all the rest, it consisteth in the eager seeking after the objects of pleasure with that desire and zeal of heart, with that devotedness of soul and strength of mind, which is due to God only. Whether it be

the love of intellectual pleasures : poetry, sentiment, philosophy, wit, criticism, genius ;—whether it be the love of sensual pleasures : meats, drinks, beautiful sights, pleasant entertainments of melody, gratification of every appetite ;—whether it be the love of the pleasures of ambition : power, dignity, wealth, renown ;—whether it be the love of the pleasures of benevolence : educating the poor, comforting the prisoner, improving the laws, delivering the oppressed, reforming the abuses, and treating the grievances of life :—whatever form of pleasure it be, so that it is contemplated out of God, and pursued without respect of his commandment or of his glory, and beloved for its own sake and for the sake of the gratification which it affordeth to the natural man, it cometh under the character mentioned in the text, —the love of pleasures, rather than the love of God. It tasteth, it enjoyeth, it revelleth in his gifts, and yieldeth him no thanks. It setteth up human nature and its dispositions, in the room of God and his commandments. It acknowledgeth not the fallen estate of the creature ; it acknowledgeth not the redemption which is in Christ ; it acknowledgeth not the sanctification of the Spirit ; it acknowledgeth not the right of election and reprobation, which is in the Father ; it denieth Christ and the resurrection ; it subverteth the foundation of the Throne of God : and the more noble, the more pure, the more benevolent, the more high-minded it is, even so much the more dan-

gerous it is; because so much the more daring, the more obstinate will it be found against the prerogative of God.

On the other hand, a man who loveth God, rather than pleasure, is one who, whatever be his talent of creation and gift of grace; whatever be his place and station in the body of Christ; whatever his calling and office in human life; doth acknowledge God as the great giver, Christ as the great householder, and the Holy Ghost as the continual monitor and counsellor, and the glory of God as the chief end. He layeth aside the love of himself, and the authority of his own inclinations; and deferreth to the will of God, and aspireth unto his love; regarding it as the first and great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength." And he honoureth God, by believing that he is Sovereign over all creatures, and over himself: he honoureth Christ, as the almighty Redeemer, who hath wrested all creatures from the power of Satan, and is constituted Lord, to the glory of the Father: the Holy Ghost he honoureth, as the Eternal Life, which Christ bestoweth; the great Quickener, the great Regenerator, the irresistible Sanctifier of every creature dead in trespasses and sins. And, thus believing concerning the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, he is in no terror nor dismay because of the wicked, that he should flee from them: for is not God their Sovereign? and doth not God restrain

their wrath, and enforce out of them obedience to his strong decree? Still less doth he fear inanimate things, places, and conditions; because they are not under the bondage of corruption willingly, but wait for a redemption; and are good in themselves, unto all who acknowledge God's propriety in them, and are by his Spirit moved to use them unto his glory. And likewise themselves, their flesh, their members—once the servants of wickedness, and still hankering after the flesh-pots of Egypt—they are not now under the slavish fear of; neither by any outward restraint of bodily service make they memorial of that ceremonial law which was nailed to the cross of Christ; but, believing in, and realizing, the mystery of Baptism, the purification and betrothment of the body unto Christ, they go abroad, with a holy and chaste eye, to look upon God's handy-works, whether seen in the beautiful though fallen world, or in that noblest work of God, the stately dignity and godlike countenance of man. With an open, but circumcised ear, they drink in the melody of nature's various song; the spiritual utterance of the voice of man, with all the combinations and inventions for drawing forth and expressing the powers of Divine harmony. With every sense awake, with every sense redeemed, with every sense directed by the Holy Spirit, the lover of God expatiates in a large freedom over the visible creation; and, unsatisfied with the

broken, marred image of his Maker, which he findeth there, his very flesh and heart cry out for the living God ; longing to behold his very Self, and to look upon the very image of his invisible Majesty, when all creation, more beautiful and fresh than when it rose in its fragrant infancy, shall stand in redeemed strength and beauty, obeying its Creator, and delighting to do whatever his pleasure is.

O ye niggard spiritualizers of God's universal promise ! ye pharisaical contemners of the material creation ! who will not hear that this rough rose-bud should blow into the fragrant and generous rose, nor that the lily which hath emerged from the waters should open its fair bosom unto the eye of heaven, I cannot away with you, for your refusal unto the sense of man of her resurrection might, and enjoyment, and possession, and pure delight, and roaming range over the heavens and the earth ; I cannot away with you, for your most unscriptural, unprophetical, unnatural dislike to hear of any thing but nature's doom, or nature's death ! Nought will satisfy you, ye heartless men, but that the world, animate and inanimate, once happy—for but a single day !—should draw its penance onward to the utmost longevity of miserable age, and then sink into the pit of Tophet, or escape away, like the chemist's mixture from his alembic, into ærial substance, fit accompaniment of your ærial heavens. The ghosts of Ossian, which sweep the clouds, and have their habita-

tions in the mists, and take their shapes from the fogs of the morning, are the best emblems of your shadowy paradise and fleeting heavens. But for my own part, as a believer in God, I do expect to see my Lord eye to eye in bodily form, not in any spiritual drapery, but with true body invested: I do expect to look upon and to rule over this world, purified and redeemed, and possessed by living creatures in flesh and blood—yet in flesh and blood redeemed from Satan, and in a measure from sin also, though still under the power of death. And as a man set for the belief of this great redemption, baptized into it, and possessing the first-fruits thereof, I do feel that I am then fulfilling my part in the purpose of God, when I stand forth in my lot, and, without flinching, or fleeing into any narrow religious circle, do take my privilege of the wide world; and, without contracting myself to any man's span, do struggle out unto the measure of Christ; and taste and see that God is good; and handle and possess the pleasant things which he hath given me; and take pleasure in his goodly works, without stint and without reservation; yet always in the love of Him who gave them, always to the praise of Him who gave them; using, but not abusing; eating, and giving God the glory; and permitting those who eat not, not to eat, and give God the glory. And if, for the sake of not offending a brother's weakness, I do refrain from this company, and from that society, and bring myself into his

measure, so to do out of expediency in those things which are lawful, according to that maxim of the Apostle: "All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient"—that is to say, there is nothing which God hath made that may not be partaken of; there is nothing, not forbidden directly by God's law, which may not be done: but, in this large and wide freedom wherewith the sons of God are made free, there are certain things which it may be expedient to refrain from, for the sake of the weakness of others. Which, observe you, is not to make expediency a law, but to make it a rule within the law; not a principle of right and wrong, but a guide to choose, amongst the things which are right, that measure which may be most profitable to the present emergency. Such I conceive to be the liberty of one who is a lover of God.

Having thus opened the two forms of spirit which are contained in the text, I now proceed, in the strength of God, to point out how it beareth upon the times in which we live: and this I shall do, First, by looking at the church, or the baptized in general; and, Next, by looking at those separatists, or sectarians in the church, who call themselves the religious world.

And first, of the church, which is the baptized, I crave your attention to the Papacy—if that may be called the church which I rather incline myself to call the apostasy;—and I pray you to observe, how therein all manner of plea-

tures whatsoever have been licensed and sold at so much a-piece, in the shape of indulgences ; yea, not in this world only, but in the world which is to come ; where, by the damnable artifice of Purgatory, they have contrived to carry on the market, to the very grave's edge ; yea, and to sell heaven itself, blasphemous pick-pockets that they are, unto the highest bidder. Look next to the Protestant church abroad ; and by the best, judge of all the rest—I mean, by the Sabbath-day ; in which God hath forbidden man to think his own thoughts, or to do his own works ; but in which they huddle over the service of God betimes in the morning, that they may have the high noon and whole evening for music, and dancing, and cards, and theatres, and merry-making, and every kind of pleasant entertainment.

But, in these discourses upon the characteristics of the present time, I have bent my attention chiefly to home, which on all hands is acknowledged, and on all accounts entitled to be acknowledged, the most religious, and likewise the most moral, of Christian nations ; which, indeed, casteth out into the sink a greater quantity of visible impurities than other nations do, for the very reason that it will keep the rest of the city pure. Homeward, therefore, let us cast our eye, and consider whether we be “ lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.” Now, of all pleasures, the most seductive, and subtle, and flattering, and likewise, as I think, the

most prevalent, is the pleasure of pleasing. To please others, to do what is kind, to have and to retain the favour of men, is at present the great snare of all the influential part of the community. This is the love of that pleasure which is reflected from the pleased countenance of men. It is the People god; the satisfaction of the people the satisfaction of God: the ripest, the fairest, and the most intoxicating fruit that grows upon the tree of pleasure. It is the adoration of pleasure in the abstract; the putting of it instead of good; the exalting of its voice into the place of law. And it is the form of the evil nearest unto judgment: for when the people cried out unto Herod, "It is the voice of a god!" that instant was he stricken of worms, and taught that he was but corruptible flesh. Truly the great men, in the exercise of their offices, are steeped in the love of pleasing. Saving a few old-fashioned thinkers, who are battered as if they were, like the Apostles, appointed unto contumely, the eloquence, the law-giving, the preaching, the very power of this our Christian church is given to pleasing. Please the Papists! please the Liberals! please the Devil himself—for most of them have got such friends with Satan, that they will stand his counsel any day. To please, to give pleasure, and to get pleasure, is the ruling principle of the day; not the love or fear of God, but the love or fear of man; that love of their present contentment by which doting

mothers spoil their children, first making them fools and idiots, that they may afterwards become wilful and furious madmen. This is one of the necessary effects of that idolatry of public opinion to which I have so often referred.

To descend, now, from this most subtle form of the love of pleasure, which consisteth in pleasing others, I observe, next, the pleasures of the intellect, which men love rather than they love God. Not, O ye adorers of yourselves ! that ye must become weak and silly in order to love God. Don't lay that flattering unction to your souls, ye wittings, when measured by the wisdom ; ye dwarfs, when measured by the gigantic intellects, of your fathers. Ye men of little books, ye men of little minds, ye men of articles in reviews and paragraphs in newspapers, ye mighty men without a name, flooding the world with an unfathered progeny ; do not fear that you are too wise and too learned to love God ; of too soaring an intellect to stoop to the humble thoughts of Him, who comprehended the largest compass of the infinite God, and fathomed the utmost depths of his unsearchable mind ; who spake as never man spake ; Light of life, Parent of reason, bright Image of God. Ah, brethren ! this decline in the stature and the beauty and the fruits of the human intellect, is to me the most assured proof of its apostasy from Christ, in whom dwelleth all knowledge ; and from God, who is the Father of lights. Human intellect hath become an idol, and is worshipped inde-

pendent of Him who lighteth every one that cometh into the world ; and men take pleasure in the works of the unsanctified intellect, without respect to the cause in which it is employed. Its power of imagination and invention, its power of expression, its beautiful similitudes, with all its imagery, are become to men objects of admiration, and a great cause of pleasure, wholly irrespective of the ends to which they are directed. The poetical justice, the moral of the tale, the purity of the sentiment, and, in one word, the moral and spiritual of the composition, are all lost sight of, in the entertainment, the power, the fertility, or, in one word, the pleasure which is set before us. They call it an intellectual age ; but they should call it the age of the love of pleasure, in which the intellect is constrained to contribute its share to the great banquet of pleasure that is served up. It is not for the discovery of the truth, it is not for the admiration of moral worth, nor for the discernment and taste of what is beautiful, but for the gratification of our likings and dislikings, that we write and read in these times. So that I may truly say, that as power hath come to serve pleasure, rather than to promote godliness ; so the eye of the understanding hath likewise come to love what is pleasant, rather than to love what is good. I think it is not many years since we first had a book entitled the " Pleasures of Imagination ;" and now I may say that we have

“Pleasures of Hope,” of “Memory,” and even of “Religion :” every thing brought, as I said, to contribute its portion to the love of pleasure, rather than to the love of God. If, again, we look to the lust, or pleasure, of the eye—which is one of the three great heads of a Christian’s trial from this present world—we shall find that men seem no longer to dread any evil in this quarter, nor to guard against it; but rather to think that the elegance and beauty of the object seen is a complete justification of the time, the expense, and the honour bestowed upon it. For example: of beautiful pictures and precious statues, of ornamental objects in our apartments, of outward decorations in our habitations, and of every other thing pleasant to the eye, the increase which hath taken place within these thirty years, abstracting the minds of our nobility and gentry and well-conditioned people from the study of homely household economy, from family cares, from noble and charitable pursuits, which hath increased the vanity and the expense of living, and propagated so much the more toil and speculation of every kind: this increase, I say, of the lust of the eye, within my own remembrance, is not to be reckoned up. Now, for my part, I believe one honest Englishman of the old school, one stern Presbyterian of the old school, to be at any time worth at least a dozen virtuosi, who have learned their craft in foreign parts, and brought it over, all redolent with Popish superstition,

or at least with Protestant indifference. I would rather have an importation of living Jesuits in the lump at once, with whom we might know to deal in fair round words, according to the manner of our fathers, than of these subtle deceptions ; which, through the lust of the eye, steal their way into the heart, and lull men asleep, like Samson in Delilah's lap, until they are fairly shorn of all their locks of strength. Take up a book of travels into foreign parts of older date than fifty years—for example, Burnett, or even Moor, or Cox—and you find the religious and moral and social aspects of men and things to have been what they chiefly reported ; but now what have ye, but the description of lakes and waterfalls, of mountains, and avalanches of snow, of pictures and statues, interlarded with a gazing admiration of the abominations of the Papacy. Those things which our fathers treated as curiosities to be narrated for the entertainment of the mind in the midst of more severe occupations, have now become the objects of request, merely because men have become lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God.—So much have I to say concerning the increase of what are called the pleasures of taste.

If now I descend a step lower, and consider the pleasures of eating and drinking, I must enter my solemn protest against the comparison to our advantage which in this respect is wont to be made with our fathers ; and I hold,

that, if our fathers indulged in greater excess, they fell far short of us in nicety, delicacy, and sensual indulgence; and their excess, also, was not the fruit of epicurean pleasure, but of robust health, hospitality, and good cheer. Their tables groaned with plenty, because they were generous and noble; but the like plenty descended upon the lowest menial of the house, and diffused itself to the cottages around them. Tell not me that it was the same love of pleasure which now must entertain a foreign cook, prime minister to the diseased constitution of our body: tell not me that the slaying of the fatted calf, and the broaching of the home-brewed liquor, and the making of a feast, as Abraham did when Isaac was weaned, as Isaac did to entertain Abimelech and Phichol, is ever to be likened to that effeminate daintiness, both in eating and in drinking, which now ruleth the corporations of our cities, and formeth a chief burden of their charge. Why should these things not be discoursed of? They are a disgrace unto the city in which we live. I declare, that with half the waste of their luxurious entertainments I would keep the families of almost all the clergy necessary for the churches of our cities. They talk about our fathers, as if they were all a set of sensualists: I wot well they would have been ashamed of us their children. They ate their meal like hungry men, and went about their work refreshed again; but we, whether from our

love of labour or of indulgence, have thrown our meal into the luxurious evening, that we may not have any after-interruption, but slide gently and softly from the banqueting-house unto our downy chamber. Brethren, blame me not for entering into these things: they are the characteristics of the times which I have taken it upon me to unfold.—If, again, I direct my attention to public entertainments, I can hardly keep my indignation within bounds. A rout, a ball, a *conversazione* for the exhibition of rarities and shews; to what do they amount but foolish spectacle? To speak, is out of the question; to discourse, madness; to breathe, oft difficult enough. What a disgrace to a Christian people! Oh, what a disgrace to a Christian people, are these our evening entertainments!—And, again, if from these I turn to look at the character of our theatrical exhibitions, the same love of show, the same gratification of the sight—splendid scenery, wonderful machinery, which now will open to you the mouth of hell, now present you with airy congregations of the gods, and now with the mockery of battle; and, in short, with every thing which addresseth the eye, which sparkles, and flames, and flares, and thunders—an endless round of sights, signifying nothing; or, if any thing, something very evil. Those things were wont to be the entertainments of children which now are magnified, and presented unto great children, the men and women who delight to

behold them. Compared with this, a comedy, and still more a tragedy, was like a sermon compared with the tricks and harangues of a stage doctor: but into every quarter, and through every department of the community, the lust of the eye, or the love of pleasure, hath led men captive away from the love of God.

Finally, dearly beloved brethren, it remaineth that I take notice of the state of that section of the church which separate themselves from the rest by the name of Religious World; who think that they, at least, are exempt from the charge of being lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, by reason of their proscription of places of public amusement, and withdrawal from all entertainments which have not a religious end in view—Concerning which proscription I have to observe this, first of all, that they make more ado about it than is either reasonable or righteous: for, as the Apostle saith, quoted above, “All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient.” When public amusements and public entertainments become degraded, as they now are in this land, it is the part of a Christian to lift up a testimony against them, and to abstain from partaking of them; yet not against such amusements or entertainments in the abstract, but only against the abuse of them. It is to abridge Christian liberty, to forbid as unlawful that which is not forbidden, upon the ground that it is not expedient to go the full range of our privileges. This is to

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confound the expedient with the lawful, which always ends with confounding the lawful with the expedient. In the practice I agree with them; but in the principle I cannot agree with them, because it is bringing in a Jewish bondage. Nor can I agree with them in their practice of proscribing all but religious discourse, as if it were unholy and unprofitable; and in proscribing books which open truth in any kind, after a grave and proper sort; and still less in separating from the common interests and constant objects of social well-being, in order to concentrate all endeavours upon missionary objects: for example, the interests of literature, of polity, of domestic economy, of equity, and, above all, of the Church established in the kingdom, its discipline, its government, its doctrine: these, the great hereditary defences and bulwarks of the land, to have left for the earnest pursuit of religious societies, together with other things mentioned above, indicate to me the spirit of a sect, which always arises from not comprehending the breadth and length of what is lawful and dutiful, and substituting instead thereof a part; which for expediency's sake may be preferred, but never to the neglect of that which is dutiful. In one word, the religious world hath substituted the expedient for the lawful and dutiful. Now, at bottom, this is also a love of pleasure, in opposition to a love of God: for the love of God leads directly to faith, and faith to declaration and

testimony of all God's counsel, and not to the
 favouring of a part. The preference of a part,
 whether it be of faith or duty, springeth always
 from the pleasing of ourselves, or the pleasing
 of others, or the pleasing of the times. Now,
 this is directly the form of pleasure wherewith
 the religious people are taken—to wit, the
 pleasing of themselves with flatteries, and the
 pleasing of themselves with glozing falsehoods.
 This is the reason why they cannot enter into
 any truth, old or new, which the religious
 world hath not approved, or may not approve.
 But if they loved God, they would speak out
 his word, without the fear of man; and, instead
 of endeavouring to continue ignorant, and to
 keep others ignorant of the same, they would
 stir themselves up, and awaken all diligently
 to search God's word—whether, for example,
 the Trinity were a true doctrine, and what use
 it is of in the Christian life; whether reprobation
 and election were a true doctrine; what
 is meant by Christ the Prophet, and Christ the
 King, aye, and Christ the Priest, as well as
 Christ the Sacrifice; and whether there be
 such a thing as the coming of the Lord in glory
 and majesty, mentioned in all the Scriptures;
 and whether there be ever such a thing as a
 spiritual coming of the Lord (which I confess
 I never heard of, or read of, till within these
 half-dozen years); and whether there be such
 a thing as a mystery of iniquity, and an Anti-
 Christ—for I am sure there is more written

in the Bible concerning these things, than either concerning Bible Societies, or Missionary Societies, or Sunday Schools, or Infant Schools, or other things of the like notoriety. Methinks, if there were not a great love of pleasure, a great love both to please and to be pleased, amongst the people calling themselves the Religious World, they might be as well employed in opening out and searching these wells, now of a long time stopped up, as in writing philippics against those who do their best endeavour to clear away the rubbish from those ancient fountain-heads of doctrine, and cry 'Fools,' 'Madmen,' and 'Enthusiasts' upon certain of us, who are zealous that the church should drink the living waters which flow from thence. There is one sure way by which you shall know whether a man loves pleasure or not, which is, by seeing how he bears to be contradicted, or in any way put out of his ordinary course. Now, if I might judge by this rule, I should decidedly say, that I have met with no people so unwilling to listen to what contradicts, or even enlarges upon, their few opinions; who resent as an insult, as a personal insult, that you should differ from them in any thing; who are so rude and riotous against any one who does not row in their boat, or steer their course, as are the people commonly called the Religious World. And therefore I very strongly suspect, that this characteristic of loving pleasure, of loving sweet things, more

than loving God; of desiring the agreeable, or, as they call it, the useful—that is, what takes with and tells upon their own friends and favourites—is specially applicable to them. They are so fretful when opposed, they are so fearful of giving offence, they are so courteous of dignities, and withal so self-complacent and so well satisfied that all others besides themselves are surely wrong, that I shrewdly suspect the cement of the heterogeneous materials is a mutual forbearance with each other's sins, and mutual pleasing of each other's dispositions, and playing into each other's hands, and, above all, the union of one common spirit to please and to be pleased with one another.

But I must conclude.—It is the part of a man, when he undertakes a work of reproof, to do it in an honest, straight-forward, and righteous manner; and being now about this work, I have endeavoured, as ye have heard, to express distinctly my convictions with respect to the pleasure-loving times in which we live. You have the convictions of the preacher, and no more. I think I do express them in the spirit of speaking the truth in the love of it; but, as I would not receive the convictions of any man, though expressed with the smoothness of oil; nor yet reject the convictions of any man, though expressed with the bitterness of wormwood: so neither do I ask any of you rashly to adopt these convictions of mine; but to come to them slowly, and through a wide

observation, as I have sought to do. But if I have touched the conscience of any of you, with respect to your own sins and short-comings in this matter whereof I have discoursed, I entreat you to give ear to that whereon you are agreed, though you may differ from me in the main conclusion. For though I have proposed to myself in these discourses, which are now well-nigh finished, the distinct object of wrestling with the evil spirit of the times, I trust I have been able to commend the truth to your consciences also, for of this I have never lost sight: and I do entreat you, dearly beloved brethren, to love God with all your heart, that you may be able to enjoy the good things of this life without offending him; and that you may be defended from being man-pleasers, and world-pleasers, and self-pleasers. Let us speak the truth one to another, in simplicity and in godly sincerity; let us rebuke one another, with all long-suffering; and in all things shew an example of honesty, simplicity, sincerity, and truth.

SERMON XVI.

HAVING A FORM OF GODLINESS, BUT DENYING THE
POWER THEREOF.

2 TIM. iii. 1, 5.

*This know also, that in the last days perilous times
shall come. For men shall, &c. . . having a form
of godliness, but denying the power thereof.*

IT is very remarkable that such a series of characteristics of the last times should conclude thus, "having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it." One would have rather supposed, that the conclusion and consummation of such a state of the church would have been the destruction of all those outward forms whereof the inward substance had departed; that, when the love of self, and the love of money, and the love of pleasure, had gotten the victory over the love of God and of goodness; when pride, boasting, blaspheming, incontinence, and fierceness, had gotten the victory over obedience to parents, grace, holiness, and natural affection; there would have continued no longer any observation of the outward forms and ordinances of religion, but all

would have departed together, into one wild chaos of confusion and disorder. And such, no doubt, will be always the finale of such a state of the world as is in these words described; but, in order that the destruction may be more complete, Satan works the mine under ground, and seems not to meddle with, but on the other hand greatly to respect, that which he is labouring with all his mind to subvert and destroy. There is no destruction affected by the artillery of war so complete as that which is made by springing a mine under the fortress: there is no disease so fatal as that which begins secretly in some vital part, and preys unseen upon the inward organs of life: so is there no corruption of society so complete as that which affects great respect for the institutions of life, and, under the disguise of Puritanism, makes way until it hath acquired a power which nothing can resist. Whereof we have a most notable example in the condition of Jerusalem, and the Jewish state, during the time of our Lord: amongst whom the sect of the Pharisees prevailed far beyond any other; who were exceeding zealous of the traditions of the elders, and thereby made void the weightier matters of the law. And, if I mistake not, we have now in this Christian land, fast ripening into perfection, the same system of outward Pharisaical forms, which is here given as the consummating wickedness of the last times. To explain which artifice of Satan, and to set it out fully in your

hearing, and warn you against it, is the subject of this night's discourse: for which I pray the Lord to grant me a double portion of the Holy Ghost.

The "form of godliness," here spoken of, is not a respect merely to the outward forms of religious worship, but to the forms of piety and godliness in the heart and soul; not merely the observance of fasts, and of tithes, and of many prayers, and washings, and such outward ceremonies as distinguished the Pharisees of old—who lived under another style of revelation, intended for the purpose of expressing and setting forth the person of Christ and the work which he did in the flesh; whereas we live in the absence of such ceremonial worship and service, whereof the particulars were taken out of the way by the cross of Christ, and are to us drowned in the waters of Baptism; and we have been translated into a spiritual worship and service of God, which is of the heart, and brings forth the fruits of piety and of holiness in the heart, and in the works of charity, to the praise and to the glory of God. Wherefore the Apostle James, speaking of religious service, or what may be called the ceremony and form of Christian duty, useth these words (i. 26, 27): "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their

affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Now, the word in our text translated "godliness," or piety, is indeed one of the most holy words, if I may so speak, which occur in the Scriptures: as in this passage, Acts iii. 12; "As though by our own power and holiness we had made this man to walk:" and in this other passage, 1 Tim. ii. 2; "That we may live quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty:" and in this other passage, iv. 7, 8; "But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness: For bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things; having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." And, to conclude with another quotation from the same Epistle, vi. 3—6; "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions, and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmises, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such turn away. But godliness with contentment is great gain." From these passages, and particularly from the last of them, which I regard as in all its parts parallel with the passage under consideration, there can be no doubt that the term godliness, used in the text, is one of the most

large and unequivocal terms by which the work of the Holy Ghost, or the reign of charity in the soul, is wont to be expressed ; and this it is of which men are declared to have a form, but to deny the power, in the last times. It signifies, that the forms of spiritual service will be in great request and in great exaltation, much talked of and much honoured, partly under pretext and partly under delusion, in these times, in which the presence of the Spirit is little realized, and his person little honoured. And, truly, when I look around me I seem to see the whole of the religious character of the times described in these words, "having a form of piety, or godliness"—having a spiritual name—"but denying the power of it." Whether I shall be able to make this manifest, or not, dependeth wholly upon God's pleasure to give me or to withhold from me the faculty of utterance; but of the thing itself I am convinced beyond the power of utterance adequately to express it. At the same time, as in duty bound, I do now once more undertake the task of declaring this evil thing ; and as it is the last that I have to make upon this subject, I pray God it may both be the greatest and the best.

To come at this matter, then, with precision, we must understand and define what is the "form of godliness," and what is its "power ;" and then refer to the state of the fact as it lies before us. Godliness, by the passages quoted above, doth signify the perfect and complete

work of God upon the heart and mind of a believer: not outward worship merely, of the sanctuary or of the family; but the inward conditions of the soul which is right with God. He that is under the power of godliness, is one who hath given himself unto the service of God in all things, as he is moved by the Holy Ghost; who hath both the knowledge of what his duty is, and hath the inclination, and is in the habit of carrying it into effect; having submitted his will in all things unto God, and the imaginations of his mind unto the obedience of faith. One, I would say, who is contrary in all things to this description of what men are to be in the last days:—Not a lover of himself, but a denier of himself: Not a lover of money, but one who regards the love of money as the root of all evil: Not a boaster, but one who vaunteth not himself and is not puffed up, who suffereth long and is kind: Not proud, but humble and contrite in spirit: Not a blasphemer, but one who never taketh the name of the Lord in vain, and revereth his holy word always: Not disobedient to parents, but honouring his father and his mother, that his days may be long in the land: Not unthankful, but full of grace and of mercy, and ready to forgive injury, and to forego the exact demands of justice: Not unholy, but having in great reverence and observing with pious care all those persons and ordinances which God hath sanctified and set apart for his holy service: Not without natural affec-

tion, but made much more affectionate than nature knoweth, towards every thing which liveth; and only restrained by the limitations of his power from opening his hand liberally and supplying the wants of every thing which hath a being: Not a truce-breaker, but observant to the very letter of that which he hath declared; keeping his covenants, paying his vows, and faithfully performing; and not changing, though he may have sworn unto his own hurt: Not a false accuser (or, as it ought to be, not an accuser), but a patient sufferer, and rather a hider and concealer of the evil, in which charity rejoiceth not, but rejoiceth in the truth; so that, when he is forced to bear testimony, it is the sacred rights of truth, and not to inform or to accuse, which constraineth him: Not incontinent, but, upon the other hand, under the government of God's Spirit, temperate in all things, letting his moderation be known unto all men: Not fierce, but gentle and meek, according to the Lord's example, who was meek and lowly, and did not lift up his voice in the streets: Not a despiser of the good, but having delight in it above all things, and ever striving and struggling to arise out of the sphere of the pleasant, and the sphere of the useful, and the sphere of the honourable, into the sphere of the good, where God alone dwelleth, and those who are God's, that is, the children of the redemption: Not a traitor, but trusty and faithful and true, devoted unto God, and therefore at war

with Satan, who is the great father of the lie—full of allegiance unto the king, full of obedience unto the laws, and of dutifulness unto all office-bearers and rulers in the church and state: Not heady, or prone to hasten the matter, but full of faith, which doth not make haste, and is established; patient to observe the openings of Providence, and to suffer God to shew the way; quiet withal, as a lamb, which follows the guidance of the shepherd and takes refuge under his protection from the wolves which prowl around: Not high-minded, but having his mind under subjection to the word of God, and refraining from speculations of the intellect and imaginations of the mind above and beyond what is written: Not a “lover of pleasures more than a lover of God,” but taking God for the portion of his soul, both in this world and in that which is to come; loving God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his strength, and with all his mind, which is the first and greatest commandment of the Law. These, all these, the opposites, or rather the contraries, of those evil dispositions mentioned in the text, do pertain unto godliness, “which is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come.” Yet all these are denied unto the men of the last times; and, withal, it is said that they shall profess a great reverence for all these things: that they shall have the “form” of them, though they deny the “power” of them.

The power of them, we have seen, they do not possess; and therefore there needeth no demonstration of the last part of the text, which hath, in fact, been the whole burden of our discourse. But the question is, do these times reverence the form of them? Is there such hypocrisy abroad amongst men, as that, while they are so dissolute in spirit as we have set forth in the above discourses, they should at the same time put on the pretence and adopt the fashion of godly and spiritual-minded men; the pretence and fashion of having a great respect for those things of which they have not, and care not to have, the power? This is what we have now to prove.

If godliness, then, be a word expressive of the largest devotedness and obedience towards God, which all Scripture seems to warrant, a form of godliness must be that outward appearance and demonstration which it puts on in the sight of men. Now, according to the largeness of the thing itself, must be the largeness of the form. If the word merely signified worship, such as we offer to God in this place, then the form would be merely the outward act of assembling, praising, praying, preaching, and blessing, unto which nominal Christians conform. But the thing expressed being of another and a far larger kind, even the worship of the whole heart, the form of it must be something beyond sabbath or holiday service, even the outward carriage, language, and action of

a spiritual and holy man—that is to say, a form of separateness from the world, and devotedness unto Christ; a form of devout language, and peculiarly sanctimonious manners and customs: such, for example, as the regular orders amongst the Papists assume, and amongst ourselves the Quakers and the Methodists. A tendency to this outward bodily exercise, which profiteth little; and not a tendency to it merely, but the practice of it; is what the Apostle declareth shall co-exist, in the last perilous times, with all the inward dissolution of the principles of Christian religion, and of society itself. But, along with this outward form of godliness, he declareth that there shall be a denial of its power—that is, an unwillingness and refusal to submit to the constraining power of piety and duty towards God. Now, the power of godliness is in changing the heart, and converting it from the power of Satan to the service of the living God; in the continual preference of the things which are unseen and eternal, to the things which are seen and temporal; and the rendering of our worship and homage unto the Creator, as manifested in the person of Jesus Christ. The state of the times here prophesied of, is therefore a state wherein outward shew and profession far surpass inward and heartfelt obedience and devotedness unto God. The former characteristics sufficiently evince the latter proposition of our text—to wit, the denial of

the power of godliness; for it is not possible that men under the power of godliness should have any one of the characteristics noted above. It is not here, therefore, that the text gives us any new information; but it informs us that a form of religion would subsist notwithstanding; that all this dissolution would, like consumption in the human form, proceed under a fair complexion, and perhaps without any consciousness of approaching death. This, then, is the thing which we shall endeavour to substantiate of the times in which we live: Not only that the forms of the church continue, but that there are pretensions to a purer and more perfect form.

I. Few words are necessary to demonstrate that in all Christendom the rules of the church and the forms of godliness are still kept up. In the Papacy, so little relaxation of the forms of religion hath there been in these infidel times, that, in very deed, there has been every where, and especially within the Papal states, a more rigid enforcement of the primitive discipline, to the end of getting up and making a last effort to rally the superstition of the people against the growing infidelity of the learned; and also to restore, if possible, the Papal influence unto its old basis of pure Antichristian usurpation, and remove it from the basis of political and diplomatical influences, where it can make no head against the predominancy of the great powers

of Europe. I am told, that at the court of Rome it hath passed into a proverb or maxim of state, since the pacification of Europe, 'We must revert to the times of Hildebrande, and endeavour to surmount the disastrous Council of Trent:' meaning thereby, that since the Reformation the Pope has leaned upon the Regal powers, instead of commanding them; and that now he feels he must either sink into contempt, or rise superior to policy altogether, into the regions of superstition, and over-rule the sovereigns by over-awing the people. To which end, I am informed, by those who have dwelt at Rome and narrowly inspected its policy, that the regular orders of monks, especially the four greater orders, have been taken into a closer and nearer sympathy with the Pope, act more in subserviency to him, and less in subserviency to the heads of the kingdoms, whom they are permitted to serve only when and how far they will serve the Pope and his religion, and act against the liberalism and infidelity of the day. Of which close sympathy between the regular clergy and the Pope abundant demonstration has been given, in the face of the world, by the exertions of the missionaries in France to restore image-worship and sell consecrated relics and images; by the steady activity of the Jesuits to obtain into their hands the education of the children; by the severe edicts to restore confession; and various other puttings-forth of energy since the pacification

of Europe. The same hath been demonstrated in Spain and in Portugal, by the diligence, devotedness, and success of the priesthood and the monks in resisting the frequent out-burstings of liberal and infidel principles. And I am not ignorant of the formation of several new orders in France and Spain and Italy, which have for their object the increase and restoration of that form of godliness in which the Papacy standeth, and which, so far from relaxing, it is endeavouring to bind more closely. And I may inform you, of what perhaps many of you are not aware, that the Papacy hath made great acquisitions in Protestant Germany, where religion had fallen away into mere knowledge and outward decency and decorum. It may be said, then, how will you apply this characteristic to the Protestant church upon the continent of Europe? I answer, that even with them there is an observance of the outward form of religion; which they do not despise, as was the fashion in the times of Frederic, and Voltaire, and Rousseau, but rather patronize, for the sake of order and of virtue, as they call it; yea, and zealously affect, as the means of propagating their damnable doctrines against the Divinity of Christ, and the offices of the Holy Ghost, and the inspiration of holy Scripture. The wonder to an enlightened man, in Protestant Europe, is, to find so much outward form of religion where so much denial of its doctrines, and even duties, exist. Bap-

tism, for example, is not abolished, nor the table of the Lord; though they neither know nor believe one jot of true doctrine concerning the church, which is separated and nourished in these two ordinances. Marriage is not abolished, though the sense of its obligations be, according to all accounts, departed. The offices of the church remain; and great energy is excited, when any true doctrine shews its face, to root it out, or banish it away. There is a great affectation of charity amongst the denominations of Protestants. The king of Prussia, the chief Protestant kingdom of Germany, hath issued lately a service-book, and organized a new discipline amongst his churches; and I may observe, that nothing offends these people of Protestant Europe so much, as when an agent of the Continental Society arrives amongst them, and preaches that they are deficient in piety: they not only believe that they have a form of piety, but that they have the power of it also. The state of the people in Denmark and Sweden and Norway, with respect to the sufficiency of their outward profession and worship in the midst of the most deplorable error and darkness, I could not have believed, but upon the most indubitable testimony: and, if I err not, that book, which hath had such a wide circulation in the Protestant churches on the continent, and is so devoid of all principle, is entitled "Hours of Piety," or "Hours of Religion," or something to the same effect. In

short, disbelieving the Divinity of our Lord, the doctrine of the Trinity, and the inspiration of the holy Scriptures, and every other fundamental principle of religion, they do yet hold themselves to be a very religious people, and can in no way be so grievously offended as by being told that they are not. It is the church acting under an infidel spirit, but preserving the forms of the church : it is the last form of the mystery of iniquity in the church, not out of the church. It doth not put itself forth as the enemy of religion, neither doth it know itself to be such ; but acteth as the friend of enlightened religion and virtue ; being bitterly set against the superstition of the Papacy, because it is set against all mystery whatever, both of man's making and God's making, the mystery of iniquity, and the great mystery of godliness. It is a spirit denying the Father and the Son, under the pretence of zeal for enlightened religion and virtue. This word virtue, which is in the mouths of all preachers unto these Protestant unbelievers, and by which word they understand all duty towards God and man, is the name which in their mouths answers to the word of the text, " a form of godliness : " by virtue and morality they mean the form of godliness. By their much preaching of it, and much priding themselves in it, they are proved to have a form of godliness : for well do we know, who know the truth, that the power they cannot have who know not Christ, but think to be justified by their own righteous-

ness. One thing more, in demonstration of the form of piety which existeth amongst the Protestant churches, is the name by which they designate those amongst themselves who know the truth; calling them Pietists; to signify that they themselves are pious, but that these err by excess of that which they themselves possess. Both, then, in the Papal and the Protestant church abroad do we behold that the dissolution of Christian and social bonds, described in this passage, proceedeth under the form of godliness: and it doth seem to me that it will continue so to proceed, until it shall have acquired strength to overthrow the Papacy, that great bulwark of mystery and antagonist of light: which judgment of God having accomplished, it shall itself be judged for its denial, and perhaps active persecution of, the name of Christ.

Let us now make our observations here at home, where all of you can be judges, and see whether or not the form of godliness be preserved. All the outward ordinances of the church go on as heretofore: in every parish there is Divine Service: the authority in the church, whether vested in individuals or in courts, continueth: there is no lack of zeal for what is peculiar to us as parts of the Christian family—nay, so far from any falling off in this respect, there hath of late been manifested in many ways a greater rigour and exactness: the Methodist and Evangelical bodies, not

contented with the ancient form of piety which used to prevail in the Protestant churches of Britain, have gone about to add thereto a more exact and rigid form, which they call 'coming out of the world.' Without judging this, I observe it as a most sufficient demonstration that the form of godliness hath not decayed along with that decay of its principles whereof we have discoursed above. But, besides these growths upon the church, I perceive within the last thirty years a very marked and striking return to the form of godliness. In Scotland, for example, it is rare to find that open avowal of Socinianism and Arminianism, and that contempt of antiquated orthodoxy, and that affectation of taste and elegance, of classical morality and foppish manners, amongst the clergy, which grieved the soul of our pious fathers during the latter half of the former century; and every body there speaks to you of the greater reverence for religion which hath grown since the French Revolution. Indeed, so far from a disrespect to the form of godliness, I do now perceive in the Church of Scotland the distinct growth of the very opposite evil,—of a spirit of formality, accompanied with great ignorance of the truth, and denial of the power of religion. In like manner, here, in England, it is a constant remark amongst the clergy, that there are no longer any of the outwardly immoral, drunken, and besotted parsons who abounded in former times so much as

to become a standing jest of pictures and songs, and even of regularly constructed tales. And doubtless it is true that there is a greatly increased regard to consistency, and decency, and appearance: with which many do comfort themselves, against all our arguments that these are the last times; never witting that this also is a sign of the last times, that there should be a form of godliness. If, indeed, we had not found this characteristic, we might have been staggered by the apparent improvement in outward form, from the general assembly down to the session of the Scottish church, and from the bishop or archbishop down to the curate in the English church; for, doubtless, since the French Revolution there hath been a great outward improvement, and, I may say, the growth of a Pharisaical rigour: but when we find this mentioned as one of the characteristics, it makes us only the more to wonder at the device of Satan in carrying on such a work under such a disguise, and the goodness of God in opening the features of Satan's work with so much distinctness. Amongst the Dissenters, again, there hath been a great increase in the number of chapels; and lately there hath been manifested a great desire for a better-educated ministry. There is also a great rigidity, and apparent holiness, in their admission to the Lord's table, and in the discipline of their churches: to which if you add the new stimulus given to outward profession by these money

societies, and the outward appearance of a pious education conveyed in Sunday schools, you will see that with them the form of godliness hath not declined, notwithstanding they have become the nursery of all those dispositions which we have discoursed of above. Even amongst the Socinian Dissenters there is a great regard professed for the purity of worship and the purity of morals : they consider themselves witnesses for the worship of the one living and true God ; they consider themselves the advocates of true Christian charity. Even our Liberals profess to be actuated by the interests of benevolence, and virtue, and true religion ; and in their works for the illumination of the people they are very careful to build up a religion which maketh no mention of the name of Jesus. And the Government hath in these last days testified, by its large allowances for new churches, that it also is caught with the formal spirit of the times. Religion is in every man's mouth ; the good of religion is in every man's eye. You would suppose the whole world were running a race to the same goal, and for the same prize of religion and virtue. *And yet, and yet*, all the above characteristics are true : the power of godliness is wanting. It is all a skreen, it is all a feint, behind which to carry on the war against God and his Christ. It is the hectic blush, which indicates health only to the unconscious dying man ; but to the physician, and those who know the signs of the disease, it indicates

the rapidity of consumption and the nearness of dissolution. Even so, to my mind this pretence and desire of the form of godliness, where its power is not, is only a proof of that hypocrisy which doubles every sin, and likewise doubles the wrath of God and the speed of coming judgment.

II. But, though all these things be true, I am not satisfied that we have yet reached to the depth of this mystery of Satan,—having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. It is not, as we said in the beginning of our discourse, a merely Pharisaical hypocrisy unto which our text hath respect; not the hypocrisy of outward acts taken on as a cloak of deception; but a far deeper work, commensurate with the work of the Holy Ghost, which it counterfeits. If you will study the work of the Holy Ghost, what it is, then take the same names, and the same things, and you shall find Satan proposing to effect them without either Father, Son, or Holy Ghost. As an example, let me take these three things, liberty, light, and morality. First, liberty, which is the deliverance of the soul from the oppression of wickedness by the power of the Spirit of adoption; according to that word, “He is free indeed whom the Son maketh free;” and that other word, “We have not received the spirit of bondage, again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption.....the Spirit of love, and of power, and of a sound mind.” This freedom of the inward man, which, when

possessed by any, doth beget a holy conversation, and deliver from all oppressions of man over woman, of master over servant, of king over subject, and the like ; bringing in its train that wholesome society which this kingdom since the Reformation hath enjoyed : this same freedom, most precious gift of God's Holy Spirit, the nations of Christendom are now endeavouring to bring about without any respect whatever to God or his ordinances. By political arrangements of natural wisdom and expediency, they are endeavouring every where to accomplish that freedom of man from his own natural savageness which is not otherwise to be attained than by the church, or by a state which hath established the church as its holy instructress in laws and government and various political and domestic relations. They are seeking, over all Christendom, to accomplish liberty, which neither Greece nor Rome nor any heathen state possessed at all, without any homage or deference unto that power of the Holy Ghost by which the tyrant and impetuous passions of human nature are brought into subjection. And behold what civil polity they have chosen for their idolatry ; even no other than this Protestant kingdom, which they hate so much at their hearts—never witting what strong and regular health in the heart wrought such comeliness in the outward parts of our political estate. And, besides this base and spurious manufacture of liberty which goeth on among

the blinded nations, there is amongst ourselves a most ungodly, ungenerous, and ungrateful endeavour going on, amongst all liberalized men, to separate political liberty from its mother, religious homage unto God and his Christ: so that, as I have said before, methinks we are come to worship the brazen serpent; and the serpent of brass must be ground to powder, if God would preserve us from becoming idolators of civil polity. This form of the last times is particularly noticed by Peter, in his Second Epistle, ii. 19: "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption."

Next to this form of the Spirit without his power, which in these times is counterfeited, I place that of knowledge, or light; upon which there is, I may say, an almost universal deception, as if it could be struck out from the natural and fallen man, without any respect unto Him who is "the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." At this time of day, they are doting and dreaming, as if through the arts, and the alphabet, and the primer, they could regenerate the human race. They will not bear to have the natural man called darkness; they will not bear to be told that the natural man apprehendeth not the things of the Spirit of Christ; that they are foolishness unto him, because they are spiritually discerned; that the light shineth in darkness, but the darkness comprehendeth it not: and they think, by preaching

to the intellect, and by ministering to the natural understanding; by the printing of lettered books, and by the circulating of the same; by much reading, writing, and casting of accounts, they think to create light, and to expel darkness from the natural estate of man. This is what I cannot away with. It is such a direct insult upon Christ, the true light; it is such a denial of the regeneration of the Holy Ghost; and such a daring insolence in denying that Egypt is in darkness which may be felt, and that Goshen only possesseth light; that I regard it as one of the arch-hypocrisies of Satan, to put the form of godliness for the power thereof; to put the vessels which contain the light, for the light; and the earthen pitcher, for the precious oil; and man, the creature whom God enlighteneth, for God, the enlightener. Next to this is the attempt to found morality upon another basis than the holy Scriptures. These apostles of Satan will go about to teach the people, that, by means of what they call treatises of useful knowledge, in which no mention whatever is made of God, of immortality, and of religion, they will bring about the keeping of the Ten Commandments, which the man Jesus Christ could not keep save by the union of the eternal Son of God and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. But these idle and filthy dreamers will persuade the world, that they, without Father, Son, or Holy Ghost, without the sacred Scriptures, or any thing whatever, will bring it about that the

scum of cities, and the very refuse of society, shall attain unto that moral purity which no man, but Christ, that ever was born of Adam, did possess. They dream, they dote, they are enraged against God, they are given up to a reprobate mind, they are demented, to think that they will bring about a moral population, without the power of the Holy Ghost.

Now, these three pretences of Satan, to free, enlighten, and moralize the people by expedients of human wisdom, have created over Christendom, and especially in this land, such a hideous system of false thinking, false speaking, and false devising, that I know nothing to which it is comparable, except the delusion of the Papacy, which had, and still hath, a language and form of holiness to cover the most corrupt and abominable system the world hath ever beheld. There is, indeed, a language and a form of holiness; they talk of the enlightening of the people, the regeneration of the people, the emancipation of the people: societies innumerable are to that effect established; writers innumerable to that effect exercise their wits; and it hath gone abroad, like a great system of intellectual delusion and falsehood; which, without a doubt, is that counterfeit of godliness referred to in the text,—a great system of building up a church state of society without the Holy Ghost. Satan hath stolen the forms of the Spirit, which in the church are represented, and he would make the world into a church,

by casting out the knowledge of Christ, and constituting himself the head and lord of all.

But this introduceth us to another and a deeper form of hypocrisy,—even that which is working amongst the spiritual themselves. But, before passing on to this third form of the evil, I pause for a moment, and entreat you, dear brethren, to turn away from such as attempt to set up this infidel form of godliness without its power. From such as will speak whole hours, by the dial-plate, concerning the improvement of the people, but if once you mention the name of Christ, or of the Holy Ghost, will strike dumb and speak no more, turn away. It is vain to think of renewing unto repentance those who are denying the Holy Ghost. Spend not your time upon them, but separate from them. I have proved, in my own experience, how vain it is to think to operate their conversion unto right doctrines and practices. For no one was more full of the spirit of accommodations, nor afraid of the spirit of bigotry, than I was; but experience taught me that one of two effects flowed from it,—either that I suffered in my own principles, or that Christ suffered in his testimony: either you are forced into a compliance with their unchristian and antichristian principles, or else you are put to silence through shame and bashfulness. Depend upon it, these pretenders unto a people's reformation without the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, are so much deceived, that they will not be undeceived by

any thing which you can say. See whether they respect the ordinances: hold they the orthodox creed? obey they the discipline of the church? wait they reverently on the sacraments? and bear they their pious part in public worship?—then I say not, separate from such because in their sentiments they differ a little from you; because such men are honouring God, and therefore we may hope that God will convince them. But are they negligent of the Sabbath? do they set more store by pamphlet and newspaper reading, than by the preaching of the word?—then beware how you join yourself unto them. I believe it is to such that the Apostle saith, “Ask them not into your house, neither bid them God speed.” Hear the word of the text, “from such turn away.” The Apostle seems to go further than I have done, requiring you to turn away from them even when there is the form of godliness; and therefore I may well say, do it when there is not the form of godliness. I think his exhortation applieth unto all under the liberal or infidel spirit, even those who follow a religious profession; all whom we have described in the above discourses, even though they should be found members of the church of Christ. I may then well ask you to separate from those who, through this evil spirit, have made shipwreck of the faith and the form of the Gospel. And I pray you, in all purposes, hopes, and endeavours, for the reformation of the people and the

land, to submit yourselves unto the Holy Ghost, who alone can work in the heart the fruits of righteousness; and to give the honour and glory to Jesus, who baptizeth with the Holy Ghost; who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification: into whom they have been baptized, and through whom they have the remission of sins; in whom God is reconciled unto a sinful world, not imputing unto them their trespasses. Him reverence, Him worship, who hath given Christ to be Head over all unto his church: head over the state, which is power; head over science and knowledge; head over holiness; the Author and Finisher of our faith; God over all, blessed for ever.

III. Let us now endeavour to search a little deeper into this formality of godliness without its power, and endeavour to expose what we conceive to be the most subtle, and therefore the most successful, of Satan's delusions. That revival of reverence for the outward form of religion which hath shewn itself in Christendom since the first explosion of infidelity, and that greater pride in the various establishments and denominations of religion, is a thing which, though it buoys up the hopes of pious people with better days about to come unto religion, they do yet clearly discern, and readily allow, to be a form of godliness without its power: and in like manner may it be said of the other artifice of Satan, described above, that, though pious people are strangely deluded by the pre-

tensions of infidelity to do the work of the Holy Spirit amongst the people, and though they very wrongfully associate themselves with these free-thinkers, and take part in their infidel schemes of enlightening, emancipating, improving, and blessing the people; still, when the subject is pressed home, they are able to perceive, and will allow, that little true benefit will be effected, save by the dissemination of the Scriptures, the preaching of the Gospel, and the work of the Holy Ghost. And all that I have further to say upon these two heads is, that I greatly desire that pious people, who have attained unto such discernment of the formality on the one hand, and the intellectual usurpation upon the other, would be a little more decided in their judgment, in their speech, and in their behaviour, with respect to both. But I have now to take up a third view of this work of Satan in counterfeiting the Spirit, which doth wholly and entirely concern the pious and spiritual themselves. It is a very difficult subject, but I do not despair, by the blessing of God, of throwing some light upon it, for the guidance of his people. It is the direct counterfeit of the work of the Spirit in the heart and soul of believers: to expose which it will be necessary, first, to open more exactly what is the work of the Spirit, that we may the better discern its form. The fruit of the Spirit, as set in contrast with the works of the flesh, is “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness,

goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." These are the blessed conditions into which a soul is brought by the inhabitation of the Holy Ghost; being the natural dispositions of the new man, which no culture of education, nor gifts of nature, can work in the old man. And the Apostle, having made this enumeration, addeth these words, "Against such there is no law;" to signify, that these dispositions of the renewed man are not at all under the cognisance of the law, even of the law moral; but are really and truly proper to the Spirit only: as he saith in the same place, "If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." In order, then, to the presence and power of these spiritual dispositions, there must be a deliverance from the legal dispositions. The bondage of the Law must be removed, in order to the freedom of the Spirit, the work of the Spirit being wholly super-legal. Now, I observe that the great body of the pious are still under the Law—not, I mean, as the ground of their justification, but as the rule of their living: there is nothing upon which they are more resolved, than that a man is not justified by the Law, but freely by the righteousness of Christ. And, next to this, they are rooted and grounded in the belief that we can do no good works but by the Holy Spirit. And, allowing these to be the two feet upon which standeth the body of doctrine taught and held amongst the pious, how can I say—do you ask me?—that they are yet legal? I will shew you how.

After you have received the Spirit, for what end have you received it? what doth he enable you to do? Is it not to lead a holy life? Yes, surely, to lead a holy life. According to what rule? of the Ten Commandments of the moral law? Yes, according to the moral law. Here, then, we have the Spirit bringing us back unto the Law; and, I ask, is not that legal?—Further, from what, I pray you, hath Christ delivered us? is it not from the curse of the law, by having been made a curse for us? And if Christ hath delivered us from the curse of the law, how should we still be under its obligations? that looks very much as if Christ had died in vain. If Christ delivers us from the law, and anon the Spirit brings us back again to the law, what shall we say, but that Christ and the Spirit work the one against the other? Furthermore, if the Spirit bringeth us again to what they call the moral law of the Ten Commandments, I ask, Doth he enable us to keep them, or not? You answer truly, Not, for I do daily offend in thought, word, and deed. So, then, the Spirit doth not enable us to keep the law; and it is a dishonoured law still; and the Spirit's work needeth to be atoned for, no less than the natural work; and it is still but an imperfect obedience, accepted for a perfect one: God enables us, by his Spirit, to do so much of his law, and Christ's work is accepted for the rest. Now, I freely confess that this

sounds in my ear very much like the worldly man's theory of salvation,—that he does what he can, and God accepts Christ for the rest. Yet, notwithstanding these evident contradictions and confusions, I believe there is hardly one of the spiritual who dares say, with Paul, “I am not under the law;” I am redeemed from being under the law. They will readily say, I am not justified by the law; but they dare not say, I am not under the law as the rule of my life, but under grace. They are afraid of the retort which Paul immediately addeth, “What then; shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace?”

Now, before shewing how this returning unto the law is the mother of formality or death in the spirit (the law being to the spirit, what Babylon is to the church, the mother of fornications), I think it good to pause a moment, and remove the charge of Antinomianism, or licentiousness, which is fastened upon this, the doctrine of Paul's holy Epistles. Whenever you say a word against the law—like Paul, or like Luther, who spared it not—they wince again, and take offence, and set you down for a licentious and immoral man. But, holy brethren, the law of the Ten Commandments is not surely the beginning and origin of holiness, which beyond all doubt is in God himself: and being in God himself, anterior to its being upon the two tables, is not, I pray, the principle and fountain-head of holiness in the Holy Ghost?

and is the Holy Ghost not in the believer? and if the Holy Ghost be in the believer, what more would ye, as the pledge and security of the believer's holiness? would ye have the Holy Ghost also laid under the law of the Ten Commandments? How absurd this is, will the better appear if you will reflect upon what the Ten Commandments are. They are not the form of holiness to the unfallen, nor to the redeemed, but to the fallen man. There is an unfallen man, there is a fallen man, and there is a redeemed man. The law of holiness to the unfallen man, was the observance of that will which was put within him, concentric with, and harmonious to, the will of God; the forbidden tree being only as an experiment of God's contrivance, to demonstrate the infirmity of that first form of the creature, and justify his goodness and wisdom in bringing the creature into a second, or fallen, form. The law of holiness, again, unto the fallen creature, is the Ten Commandments, which every one do presuppose an inclination to sin, which they interdict. But inclination to sin, is the definition of a fallen creature: and therefore, I may say, every letter of the law telleth of Paradise lost, and of death and curse inherited. Now, this was the law which Christ kept blameless and inviolate, and which none else but he hath kept, or will keep, until human nature be constituted totally different from what it now is; such as I believe it will be in the Millennium.

What is the use then, I ask, of breaking men's hearts and breaking God's law both? No wonder Luther called the law such a hangman. This law is, I say, havock and death unto the flesh. But, pray you, is not the flesh put to death and buried in Baptism? and who cry havock, or do murder, upon that which is dead and buried? Do you say, 'But my flesh liveth still?' I answer, It liveth only in thy defect of faith. Take heed how thou lettest it live: in so doing thou warrest upon the Spirit. But if thou honour the law, then live thy flesh will—that is to say, if thou be on good terms with the law, and think well of it, and it think well of thee, then rest thou assured that thy flesh is reviving;—but if thou feel the law to be thy murderer and oppressor, and canst not bear it, then it is some proof that thy spirit is come alive. In one sense, indeed, the spirit loves the law, because it kills the flesh; for the spirit lusteth against the flesh. As the virtuous state loveth the executioner who slayeth the guilty, as the health of things loveth the storm which scattereth the unwholesome fog and pestilence; so the spirit honoureth the law, as holy and just and good, because it helpeth to kill the flesh; to destroy the fallen man, that the redeemed man may quicken apace. It is called the law of sin and death, because it doth bring into corruption the seed of redemption, that the new life, which is incorruptible, may spring and flourish for ever. Now, when this re-

deemed, regenerated life hath been by the Holy Ghost given, it springeth up into the likeness of Christ's resurrection : in the ground it is planted in the likeness of his death, but above ground it springeth in the likeness of his resurrection. We are risen with Christ, and we seek the things which are above : our life is not seen, but hid, with Christ, in God. It is foolishness unto the world ; which the Ten Commandments certainly are not. The rule of this life then, I say, is the Holy Ghost's own free disposition. He moveth and disposeth us, according to the will of God, according to the mind of the risen Christ, in righteousness and true holiness. His is no system of interdicts, or of preventions ; but of sweet, gentle, gracious inclinations ; whereof the law is the law of liberty, whereof the essence is the spirit of charity : of which, if you would have written forms, I would refer you to the xiiith of the 1st of Corinthians, where charity is unfolded ; to the 1st of 2d of Peter, where the complements and additions of faith are given ; to the passage quoted above from the vth of the Galatians, where the fruit of the Spirit is given, and to which we return again : " The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance : against such there is no law."

How congenial this doctrine, which we have laid down, is with the mind of Christ, is manifest from the Sermon on the Mount, wherein

he doth take up the leading precepts of the moral law, and extend, and enlarge, and refine, and apply them, to such a degree as to make every man utterly miserable and guilty; and ever and anon he addeth, that except their righteousness come up to this pitch of perfection they cannot see the kingdom of God. Did Christ intend by this extension and enforcement of the Ten Commandments to make his disciples miserable, by hedging them round with such a pointed fence, whereof every point was death? No; but he meant to convict the Pharisaical spirit of self-satisfaction with certain attainments of obedience, and at the same time to shut his disciples up unto the righteousness which is by faith. Secondly, how congenial it is with the writings of the Apostle Paul, is manifest from every part of his Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians, where he setteth the promise continually in direct opposition to the law, and reproveth and rebuketh them, who had received the Spirit by faith, from going back to be perfected by the law. And James sealeth this matter well in his Epistle, where he saith, "He that keepeth the whole law, and offendeth in one point, is guilty of all." And, to descend to lower authorities, how Luther rages against the law as a rule of life, instead of the Holy Spirit, every one, who hath read his Commentary on the Galatians, doth well know. And to mention only one other authority, familiar to us: after that, in our Shorter Catechism, the

Ten Commandments have been excellently opened, after the manner of the Sermon on the Mount, the question which followeth is in these words: "Is any man able perfectly to keep the Commandments of God?" Which is thus answered: "No mere man, since the fall, is able in this life perfectly to keep the Commandments of God, but doth daily break them, in thought, word, and deed." And again: "What doth every sin deserve? Every sin deserveth God's wrath and curse, both in this life and that which is to come."

Now, I stand up boldly, and declare my firm belief that the fear of being considered antinomian, or, which goes before this, the fear of committing ourselves to God's Spirit, freely given to us in our baptism, is the cause why there subsist spiritual forms around a legal heart. The root is legal, the root must be legal, wherever there is such a legal tendency in the mind; and therefore the fruit is legal at the heart, though in the outward form it may seem to be spiritual. The belief in Christ's atonement for sin will not make a complete Christian; and, if separated from the work of the Spirit, which as I have shewn hath nothing to do with the law, the doctrine of atonement will become the great indulgence and the extreme unction of the natural man. If, again, it be conjoined with the work of a spirit resting upon the law, then, by moving in a circle, from the law, through Christ's atonement and the Spirit, we

have come back to the law. Again, therefore, I say, atonement or no atonement, the fruit will be legal at the heart, whatever it may be in its appearance. And, accordingly, I have shewn in the above discourse, especially under the heads of "unthankful," and "unholy," and "false accusers," how legal the works of the church are become. Outside, indeed, as in the reports of societies, they are truly spiritual; but inside, in the management, they are truly carnal and legal. Any body knows this, who will be at the pains to examine. So also is it in the management of churches and of chapels: the pulpit must be evangelical, but behind the scenes the management is legal. Look, for example, at the Sunday-school institutions. Be present in their public meetings; read their reports, their published books; and you will find nothing but the most holy, evangelical spirit. Go then on a Sabbath, the holy day of God, into their schools; you shall find them teaching reading, writing, and perhaps casting of accounts; which, in the parish schools of Scotland, laying claim to no spiritual character, were deemed too secular to come nearer the Sabbath than Friday night. Go, again, into their meetings for fellowship one with another; and it will seem more after the manner of a forum, than of holy communion of the teachers and guardians of children. In the Bible Society, to take another example, which assumeth such a holy, catholic appearance; it is not long since it

was applauded as the true doctrine, and perhaps may be so accounted still, that it really was not a religious society at all: and certes this seemeth to be the truth, whenas we know they contend to the uttermost against opening their meetings with prayer. I am quite willing to go the round of every other evangelical, spiritual work, which hath given so much celebrity to these latter days, and to shew that they are legal, worldly, yea, and often hard-hearted in their administrations: insomuch, that, after much experience, I do uniformly dissuade, when asked advice upon the subject, from entering into their service. Not that I love the missionary cause less, which I love more than they; but because I do not love that the evangelical and legal spirit, which it is the object of the Holy Ghost to keep distinct, should be mingled and confused. And so exceeding overwhelming in its influence is this spirit become, that it seems to change the very aspect of womanhood itself; yea, even of tender-hearted mothers; who, when clubbed into a committee, I have known guilty of the cruelest things towards even the most deserving of their own sex. Of all this legality and Pharisaism the cause is both the superabundance of pretension, and the violation of the ordinances of God; which I have examined, in vain, to find one for permitting those who are not deacons to intromit with the monies of the church; or another permitting men that are not

elders or deacons or bishops, to give orders to the holy ministers of the church; or women to take upon them the like functions; or, in short, any ordinance for any one thing they do in their collective capacity. Now, it doth ever happen, in the righteous retribution of God, that, when his ordinances of the sanctuary are violated, they draw with them the subversion of the ordinances of natural life: truth and falsehood become conformed; the laity and the clergy become blended—or, rather, the laity rule it over the clergy, even in spiritual functions—woman usurps it upon man, and man forgets his office of guiding, cherishing, and loving woman; and, in one word, there cometh into being a form of godliness without its power; spiritual names to the uttermost with legal realities to the uttermost, evangelical pretensions to the uttermost with worldly actions to the uttermost!

But this evil of the Evangelical formality hath extended itself far and wide throughout the spirit of Christian society, which hath in a great measure lost its ancient largeness and completeness, and been moulded into a particular form, like fashionable society, or literary society, or any other section of men. To understand distinctly what I mean, you must reflect a little upon the way in which the Holy Spirit works the victory over the world: not by going out of the world, as the Monks teach and practise; nor by separating into little com-

munities, and forming a society within ourselves, as the Moravians and others recommend : not by changing our callings from one profession to another, against which the Apostle distinctly lifts his voice : but by recognising the world as a great work of God's predestination and providence, ordained by him as a thing most necessary for the discipline of his saints, and therefore not by any means to be shunned of them. The Holy Spirit, therefore, doth take a man where he findeth him, and teacheth him, in that very place and station, how he may glorify God, and set forth the mind of Christ, in his family, in his transactions of business, in his intercourse of friendship, in all the public and private affairs of his life. Nor doth the Holy Spirit enlighten such an one's mind only on some one particular subject, but on every subject, connected with life and godliness. In every hearing of the ear, man heareth truth or falsehood, in every opening of the mouth he speaketh love or malice, in every glance of the eye he looketh benignity or cruelty ; and being so, the believer is taught and enabled of the Holy Spirit to know, and to prefer, and to express, that which is good and gracious, and full of righteousness and truth. The whole world is the field wherein he is to glorify God, by receiving and using it according to the good ends for which God created it, and unto which the Holy Spirit reclaimeth and redeemeth it. The whole heart and mind of man, God's complete creation work,

he doth feel himself called upon, and empowered by the Holy Ghost, to redeem out of the hands of sin into the obedience of faith and holiness. So that, how large is human life, and how much larger is the human heart, than all which life can embody and contain; so large and universal is the work of the Spirit: which, therefore, being thus rightly understood, can never degenerate into a mode of being, but must be large as being itself. Wherefore, the Christian is the new *man*; and a man is not a profession, but a being. No doubt he fulfilleth his professional life also in that Spirit which ruleth over all with him; but it is his life—his living, moving, breathing being—which the Spirit redeemeth to God. This catholic spirit will preserve from all modes and fashions, from all local and temporal influences, and will make it more difficult to deceive ourselves with a form, or to deceive others with a counterfeit, of Christian character. But when it unhappily comes to pass that religion becometh merely one subject of discourse amongst many which may be introduced—as politics, or science, or literature, or arts—instead of being the right and true discourse of every subject; when religion associates itself with an order of men—as the clergy, who ought ever to be foremost in her service, but never to the exclusion of any one;—when religion associates itself with particular societies of men, to the exclusion of others—as Bible, or Missionary, or School Societies;—when religion associates itself with

particular works—such as subscribing to those societies, attending their meetings, and such like;—then it taketh upon itself a contracted and narrow form; becomes one separate interest in the community amongst many others, and eminently tendeth to engender a sectarian instead of a catholic spirit, to encourage hypocrisy and dissimulation in those who for any sake would attain the same peculiarities and distinctions: it becomes a *character*, and not a *life*; a mode of being, and not being in the largest sense. Unto which state of the church I judge our text to have reference, declaring to us, that the latter times would be marked by this exclusive spirit, which, indeed, must ever come, when the bonds of universal charity relax and dissolve themselves. As a state and nation, when from various causes its bond of loyalty and community dissolveth, doth straightway fall into several parties, confederate by the influence of particular leaders, localities, or interests, which provide every one for its own separate well-being, and often at the expense of all the rest; even so in the church, when her love and unity decline, as every one of these characteristics declare in the last times they shall, it will come to pass that various sects and parties will arise, each comprehending but a portion of the common truth, and for that portion exceedingly zealous; formal, having Shibboleths perhaps: for an end of common ambition, or for common safety, confederate;

but extending one to another no cordial love, and ready to act against each other with bitterness, when it no longer serveth them to remain united. This, which is the natural fruit of a dissolving community, I do clearly discern in existence at this time. There is a narrowness in the information and discourse of religious people, confining it to particular topics and set phrases; there is a feeling that all thought and all discourse which beareth not upon these alone, is not unto God's glory, and ought not to be entertained. There is, in like manner, a licensing of books which treat of religion in this same exclusive style; and a gainsaying of men who will not so contract their views of godliness; and a devotedness to the exclusive object of religious associations, to the forgetting and neglecting of the great catholic offices of human life. And, withal, in these things there is a conscious pride and security, as if they were the all in all and only thing needful: that truly I may say, compared with the church in former times, this our condition hath its parallel only in the particular and exclusive zeal of the crusaders, or in the particular and exclusive zeal of the monastic orders. For be it diligently observed, that at the Reformation there was nothing of this sort manifested; though in single years more reformation proceeded then than now in many—if reformation this evangelical style of it can be called. Then, men were taught to stand to their posts and make

good their positions for God. Fathers, mothers, children, masters, servants, kings, nobles, people, judges, magistrates, and every several office-bearer in the commonwealth, were taught and instructed how to glorify God in their thought, speech, and behaviour. The irresistible Spirit was set against all resistance, to prove how weak and insufficient it was to withstand the electing, redeeming, regenerating God. And what issued ? There issued a church and a commonwealth ordered in all things according to the mind of God ; whose noble institutions did, as it were, start up and form themselves, at the voice of the Spirit, into battle order against the apostate nations of the world. O my country ! how glad were I to have lived in those times of Reformation, and put in a feeble hand to the great work of building up these noble bulwarks ; which now, alas ! with the patriot's love I go around in this the twilight, and behold them all despised and dismantled ; without watchmen to look out in this season of the night, during which, I am well assured, the enemy will fall upon them, and lay them waste. We are like Jerusalem, with her various fiery, furious partizans, who were set in mad array against each other what time the Romans had cast a trench around her and were fortifying a mound against her. But, be it so, since God's holy purposes are accomplishing : we " look for a city whose builder and whose maker is God."

IV. But there is yet another kind of formality,

which lies deeper, and is the root of all these, and which applies directly to personal religion. It flows from the common source of endeavouring to direct the Spirit by the law, instead of making holiness the form of the Spirit's willingness. The Spirit is peace and joy in believing. The Spirit is not the mere obedience of certain rules, or the filling up of certain molds of life; but it is the peace and joy and health and blessedness which there is therein. The Spirit is a Divine Person, and bringeth with him the attributes of a person: not so much power to set in motion so much machinery and do so much work; but that very mind, disposition, affection, and holy serenity in the midst of all trials, which belonged unto Christ; yea, and likewise the security, the power, the heavenly gladness which belongeth to him now. The power of godliness is not mere power to act, but power to know, to love, and delight in God. It is not mere power to mortify the flesh, but power to enjoy the Spirit: it is a life in God, a life with God, a life upon God. Now, if I go about to seek such heavenly-mindedness, such peace and joy, where shall I find them amongst the churches? Who possesseth those benefits which in our excellent Catechism are declared to accompany and flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification—viz. assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein unto the end? Instead of this abiding

life of the Spirit, you have some who will speak of their frames and feelings, and others who will speak of their evidences! What! doth a man who is alive need to refer to evidences to prove to himself that he is alive? And shall a man who hath in him eternal, immortal, undiseased, and imperishable life, not know that he hath the same? Or is the life of the Holy Spirit like unto an ague or fever, which cometh by fits, and induceth various frames and feelings, now and then?—My dear brethren, give no heed to such unworthy representations of the Divine life, but expect, if you yet possess not, that God will reveal himself unto you, as he doth not unto the world. And how manifest himself? let the Lord himself answer, when this question was put to him: “If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” It is to me the clearest of all demonstrations that we have only a form of the Spirit’s work, when I find not only such a deadness unto the call made for assurance and joy in the Spirit, but even a great muster and array against those who make the invocation. Oh, there ought to be such a knowledge of God in the Spirit as will bear all trials and adversities, and sustain us against all the clouds and tempests which may roll over our souls. The presence of those clouds, and the noise of those water-spouts, should not be able to overwhelm our assurance of God’s presence and

God's sustenance, nor hinder us from saying, with the Psalmist, "My God, even my God, is my refuge." Tell me, brethren, if that were not formal friendship which was only felt in particular frames and feelings of the soul. Tell me, if that were not cold love which required ever to be recounting her evidences, as a Papist doth her beads. What! is the possession, inhabitation, and regeneration of God's Spirit no more than this Galvanized state of being? You know what I mean by a Galvanized body: when life is extinct, by the application of a Galvanic apparatus they can cause it to move its limbs, distort its face, and give other mimic signs of a living thing. Such a life is that which in fits and starts manifests its action, and in moods and humours of the soul shews its existence. Nay, but that is not life; that is not Divine life. I tell you, brethren, there is something better for you than this. Be not offended when I say that you shall know and feel better things than this. Blame me not, if this discourse should reprove you of formality still; but rather bless me, for having brought more excellent things unto your remembrance; and, forgetting the things which are behind, reach forward to the things that are before, striving for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ. It is not dead spiritualities, but a living Spirit, that is your inheritance. After which living, quickening Spirit seek ye: for into the possession of the same

ye have been baptized; and if ye have not realized his sweet and precious influences, it is because you have not believed and hoped enough. Be glad, therefore, that so much remaineth of good and of delight to experience and to enjoy. Cast away the formalities, and the pretences, and the imitations of men: yield yourselves to the realities, the enjoyments, the delights of the Spirit of God. Say, "Be it unto thy servant according to thy will! I am thine: lead me by the waters of thy pleasure. My God, shew me thy salvation. My Lord, fill me with thy good Spirit. Make me to know the joy of thy chosen, and to rejoice with thine inheritance."—My dear brethren, step not formally from duty to duty, but be filled with the will of God: add not evidence to evidence, but be filled with trust in God. Dwell in God, and let God dwell in you: abide in him abundantly, for his goodness and his mercy endureth for ever. Fear not: "Trust in the Lord, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

I am sure that no one who hath proved, as I have done, the idleness of what is called spiritual and evangelical society; the timorousness of their spirit, the instability of their thoughts and opinions, their love of novelty and excitement, their bitterness and violence towards any one who cleaveth not to them, or to their leaders—no one who hath proved, as I have done, the sandy thinness of this soil, and its incapacity to receive, to retain, or to fructify the true and pre-

cious seed of the kingdom, will account me to have spoken harshly, or unjustly, or uncharitably. As God knoweth, this fashion of religion, which hath come up in our cities, is the subject of my daily grief and daily prayers. My desire is to see every saint in full communion and fellowship with the Holy Ghost. I do not wish you to be under Moses; nor yet to know Christ according to the flesh; nor yet to be under the bondage of a visible church; nor yet to be under the influence of a religious society, or religious world; but to be delivered into the free communion and fellowship of the Spirit of Christ. Let Moses and his law be the terror and horror of your natural man, and force you unto Christ, who hath kept the law, and oblige you to take shelter from the curse of God, and refuge under the wings of Jesus, who hath fulfilled all righteousness. Take Christ's work in the flesh as your deliverance from the law; take his death and crucifixion as the crucifixion and death of your natural man; but, as you would not hang upon a cross for ever, nor for ever be immured in a tomb, receive the Holy Ghost, freely offered unto you in the church of Christ, set forth to you in the ordinances, bestowed upon you in Baptism, continually renewed unto you in the holy Supper, and exhibited to your faith in the communion of the saints. This Holy Spirit, I say, Spirit of love, Spirit of freedom, receive ye, and enjoy ye; and be by him endued with

power from on high to crucify the flesh, with its corruptions and lusts; to overcome the world, with all its forms and fashions; and to live with God in the fulness and freeness and blessedness of his chosen people. Adopt none of their formalities, neither Legal nor Papal nor Methodistical; but, as free, use your freedom unto the glory of God, and not unto licentiousness. This is the power of godliness, to be led by the Holy Spirit; to be under His power whose law is the law of liberty; when self no longer swayeth, no longer liveth, but Christ liveth in us, and the same mind which was in him is also in us.

I could say much more concerning these various formalities, Legal, Papal, and Methodistical or Evangelical, but time permitteth not: wherefore I do take leave of this part of the subject, with a solemn commendation of you to the grace of God, that ye be not again entangled with the yoke of bondage. Remember, that those whom the Son hath made free, are free indeed.

SERMON XVII.

DISCOURSE RECAPITULATORY, TO SHEW THE PHARISAICAL CHARACTER OF THE TIMES.

2 TIM. iii. 1—5.

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own-selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.

HAVING now completed the round of these fearful sins, and shewn them to apply unto the state of society and the church in which we now live, I feel desirous of performing two things further, before giving this large discourse unto the church in general. The one is, to recapitulate the substance of what hath been said, and at the same time to expose, point by point, the disguise of Satan, under which he is purloining the treasures of the church; that his arts may be laid open, and the Pharisaical

character of the times disclosed. The second thing which I would wish to perform, for the sake of the church and for the sake of this our native land, is, to point out, under a few heads, the chief causes of the evil, and the remedies of them. And these things I will now, by the blessing of God, attempt; beginning with the work of recapitulation, unto the end of exposing the delusions of Satan and the present Pharisaical character of men.

1. And first with respect to the character of self-love. There perhaps never was a time in which disinterestedness was so much laid claim to. To hear what is spoken, from the very centre of the religious world at the public meetings of societies, unto the utmost bound of liberalism in our courts of parliament, you would think that disinterestedness and universal charity were the spring of all public and private exertions; that the desire of office and the pursuits of ambition were clean lost in the love for the people and the prosperity of the commonwealth; and that the distinction of sects in the church, and all controversies concerning doctrine, and all distinctions of Churchman and Dissenter, of Baptist and Anabaptist, of Protestant and Papist, were about to depart from the earth for ever: while under the guise of this thin cloak I have declared it to be my belief, and shewn good grounds for believing, that never in the Christian church was there so much selfishness and

so much sectarianism; but, without doubt, there is the form, appearance, and profession of the very opposite. And if the grounds which I have given for believing that it is a self-loving generation be true, then is it clear also that it is a generation which hath a form of godliness in this respect, while it doth deny the power thereof.

2. Covetous, or lovers of money, we have indeed proved men to be, by two indubitable tests; which are, the increased toil and bondage to which they submit, and the increased luxury of living in which they indulge; the one driven on by the appetite of the other, and both together conspiring to give money an extraordinary purchase over the affections of men. Yet behold how the number of subscriptions unto charitable and religious societies have increased, with every man's name and surname distinctly subscribed, beside the pounds, shillings, and pence which he contributes; and who, after this, shall call it a money-loving age? I do; I have proved it so to be; and I say, moreover, that these public and published subscriptions are only a part of the hypocrisy which hath mastered the actions of men. For our Lord expressly commanded, that his people in their alms should not let their left hand know what their right hand did, and charged it home upon the Pharisees that they sounded a trumpet before them when they went to do their alms: but sure I am, that no trumpet which a Pha-

risee ever sounded, did make so notorious a report, or boast with such a brasen throat, as do our Christian societies, at public meetings, over the amount of their gifts, magnifying themselves with thunders of applause. They look back and sigh over our fathers, as if generosity had only begun to live in our days; whereas I believe, with a few honourable exceptions, there never was an age in which the charitable contributions of men bore so small a proportion to what they lay out upon themselves in some way or other, whether of living, or of amassing fortunes unto their children, or of pleasure in travel, or of entertainments of the sense, or of commercial speculations. In deed and in truth, I believe that in the history of mankind there never was exhibited, upon the face of the world, such a proof of the love of money, as was exhibited in this Christian city by the joint-stock companies only three or four years ago: and yet you see, notwithstanding, they claim for the age the character of being indifferent to money. In this respect, therefore, the profession and spirit of the age are in direct opposition to one another: they have the form, and lay claim to the credit, of generosity, when they are covetous to the last degree.

3. With respect to boasting, which we established to be a characteristic of the age, inasmuch as they hold themselves superior to all ages which ever have been, talking about the enlightened times until they have come to believe a lie:

It is a base pretence; for, excepting in what respects number, form, and quantity, together with the mechanical and chemical properties of matter, there never was an age so ignorant, so brutishly ignorant, of the principles of morality, logic, philosophy and religion, policy and ethics, or duty in general: so that it is really the pure spirit of boasting, the swaggering talk and pompous pretension of a boaster. Yet are they totally ignorant that this characteristic belongeth unto them, and do fancy and feign themselves to be the most modest and retiring people that have ever been. No man must speak in the first person, it is so egotistical: no man must tell out his bold convictions, it is so self-sufficient: no man must differ openly and manfully from others, it is so boastful: and there is such a coyness and affectation of bashfulness, aye, and such a false delicacy, where none is needed, that I declare you would suppose men were no longer persons, but parts of a great living system; and that to assert your personality, and single-handed to speak out your faith, were a crime against the great many-headed monster of the public which together they compose. And this, indeed, is in a few words the truth of the whole matter, that men have yielded themselves up to a common Spirit, which hath destroyed their personality, and made those to be mutes and eunuchs in his palace, who should have been every one valiant for the Lord of hosts, strong and mighty in the

service of the Lord Jesus Christ. And thence it is, that the contradiction exists which always is found to exist between the private personal character and the outward acts of those who have sold themselves to be slaves unto a tyrant. Not so, however, with those who are servants of the Holy Spirit—or rather, I should say, “no longer servants, but sons”—because they do each one receive the Spirit of freedom, and, being renewed in the image of Christ, do express fearlessly and boldly, yet without boasting, that character which the Spirit hath made them to be of, while they fulfil that office unto which the Spirit hath called them.

4. This same character of affected humility, and backwardness to speak of ourselves, proves the charge upon the next count, which is, pride, a supercilious conceit of ourselves and contempt of others;—a characteristic of the times demonstrating itself in every thing, especially every thing critical which is written, where those who modestly, and timidly, and humbly hide their names, and with the appearance of lambs begin to speak, do soon pass to the rage of the lion and the cruelty of the tiger. I cannot away with the hypocritical cant of modesty and diffidence with which this age putteth forth the most proud and supercilious boastings of itself. It is totally a new character of the Protestant church, that under such Christian-like humility there should lurk such cruelty, such mockery, such destructiveness of

every thing which dareth honestly and plainly to differ from what not a council of divines, or any church, or the word of God, but public opinion and the spirit of the age, doth censure.

5. Blasphemers, we have proved the age to be, both by the unheard-of blasphemies which are uttered against the name of God, with open front, and fearless defiance of all decency, all law, and all religion; and likewise by the toleration, and I may say even patronage, of the blasphemer—with whom the great body of those calling themselves religious do take part, in their hot zeal for liberality;—and, moreover, we proved it from that most unnatural communion which hath of late years proceeded, and now is perfected, between those who are reputed orthodox, and those who blaspheme the name of Christ and say that He is nothing but a man. And now, if you charge their crime home upon the blasphemers, they will tell you, that it is the interests of morality which moveth them! the interests of universal benevolence! the religion of the God of nature! And if you charge home upon the liberal Christian their indulgence, countenance of, and taking part with, the blasphemer, and not with the law, they will tell you, in like manner, that it is the interests of religion which they have at heart; to prevent their books from being circulated, to prevent themselves from becoming notorious! And, again, if you charge the crime of uniting with blaspheming Unitarians home upon the

orthodox Dissenters, they will tell you, that it is for the interests of religion they do so, in order to protect religious liberty! which they greatly prefer before an orthodox creed and purity of communion. And so it is these various forms of blasphemy get countenance and encouragement from the liberal-minded generation, under pretence and zeal for the honour and glory of God: of which if any one ask me for an explanation, I give it in the words of the text: "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."

6. Disobedient to parents we have shewn men to be, because of the creeping downwards of crime, from the stout highwayman to the years of youth, and almost to the irresponsible years of childhood. Of which juvenile depredations—though a few, no doubt, are committed with the consent and by the desire of profligate parents; yet, truly, have we still a better opinion of human nature, than to account this general; and therefore we place it to the account of disobedience unto parents. Of which departure and decay of the Fifth Commandment from the code of family instruction, whereof it is the soul, we shewed that the prevalence of Sunday schools, the invention of infant schools, and the interference of law to protect children from the avarice of parents and of masters, were public and standing monuments: and, yet, if you come to speak of education, and of the rising genera-

tion, men gaze like fools, bewildered with admiration. 'What enlightened and excellent people will be formed, when all these national schools, and British schools, and infant schools, and Sunday schools, have come to tell out their effect upon the people!' The delusion is so great, that they rejoice in the quantity of medicine that is used in the house, instead of rejoicing in the quantity of food. For to me, a churchman, a Christian, and a father, it is manifest and clear that the food of manhood and womanhood is intended by God to be by parents given, and from parents got; and that schools of learning and of art are only supplements thereto, for providing that less important part of knowledge and character which parents cannot give. And if you ask them, why it is that they educate their children without respect had, often not at all, and seldom or ever sufficiently, to their religious duties; no catechism of faith, no code of Christian morality, no defences of Christian discipline, nor any thing the like, made known or practised in their schools; they answer, it is for the glory of God, that the more may come and be instructed; that there may be no hindrance unto any! and, moreover, say they, we have for religion such a holy reverence, that we rather leave it to their parents and their ministers! Well, I say, then call yourselves letter-teachers, teachers to spell and syllable, to write and cast accounts; but do not go about to proclaim yourselves as educators of the people, as advancers of

pure religion, and such-like idle and foolish pretensions ; all, all, a form of godliness without the power.

7. With respect, now, to the next feature of the times, which is un-eucharistical ; shewing itself in a constant appeal to law and justice, as if this were the highest standard of Christian morals, which is, indeed, the point at which Moses endeth and the Gospel beginneth : so that men do now-a-days expect from each other a conformity to righteousness in all things, which is the essence of fallacy ; instead of expecting shortcomings in all things, and being provided with a store of grace and mercy and forgiveness, which is the true spirit of Christ : With respect, I say, to this ungracious spirit, I observe, that it indicates the Pharisee in the man who entertaineth it, and it produceth the Pharisee in the age in which it is held up. Now, I do know for a certainty, that it is neither a part of the theology of these times to shew unto Christians how Satan can tempt them, and God suffer them to be tempted, yea, and to be overcome also, in order that he may shew them their sinfulness and his grace, and the grace of his church : nor is it any part of the discipline of churches to expect such temptations and victories of Satan amongst their members, and to be provided with help and counsel and pity and healing ; but actually to cut off from the church, or to suspend, any one, and every one, that moment he cometh under a cloud and is

liable to censure. So that I do say, what would require a long discourse to explain, that the spirit of religion, in being un-eucharistical or ungracious, is actually becoming, both in doctrine and in discipline, Pharisaical and hypocritical. For how can it otherwise be, when men are expected never to err, and, if they come short, to be branded with infamy, or cast out of the synagogue—should they, for example, go to a place of public entertainment; hear a proscribed minister, as myself; or become debtor and unable to pay—than that they should all with one consent, under the blighting influence, the cold nipping blast of law and severity, come to lower the standard of Christian morals, to degrade the high elevation of the Christian spirit; which no man can attempt to ascend unto, or did ever attain, without losing many a footstep and falling back many a time? Law, right, exaction to the uttermost, the payment of every farthing, is an excellent principle for fostering that pride of human merit and sufficiency of self which are given above as characteristics of the times—but it is the very principle for slaying all love and grace, pity and compassion; which, if I understand the matter at all, are the characteristics of the Gospel. They are exactly the features of those whom the Lord desired his disciples to beware of; nay, and not the features only, but the very formative principle of the Pharisee: so that, wherever it existeth in the spirit of an age, and reigneth over grace, it

will change that age from evangelical into pharisaical, which I see fast coming about; and, moreover, it will prepare the way for the Law to make void the Gospel, as indeed it is at this day; and bring about many other evils, into which time permitteth not that I should enter.

18. The charge of unholiness we brought home unto the men of this generation, by shewing into what indifferency, not to say contempt, the most spiritual, and they in particular, had come, with respect, first, unto God's holy word, that they should have corrupted it by the intermixture of Apocryphal books, and, when detected therein, should have gone about to defend it with all their might, not scrupling in their zeal to strike at the very root of inspiration itself; which if they have not subverted, they have at least shaken, in the minds of many; summoning into action the evil-speaking, contentious, unholy periodical publications. And now, such is the spirit of hypocrisy spread abroad, that these very men, who have so acted, and so defended their deed, will tell you that they do it for the Gospel of Christ's sake, and to further the glory of God! and consider themselves as persecuted for righteousness, because they have been called to question for their delinquency! Nor have they confessed, nor will they confess, nor, because the spirit of hypocrisy is upon them, are they able to confess, that they have erred by being unholy, in so far as the holy word of God is concerned. I do

not mean to say, that knowingly they are hypocrites, but I do say that they have lost the faculty of discerning what hypocrisy is, and are under the mastery of a delusive, deceitful spirit. I brought the charge of unholiness home to the church, upon the ground, also, of indifference to, or desecration of, religious ordinances, particularly Baptism, and the Lord's Supper: whereof, being called upon to administer the former as the great seal of sin's forgiveness, and the great covenant that the Holy Ghost will be given, and teaching all the people to look upon themselves as cleansed from dead works and empowered to serve the living God, they have gone about to gainsay this everlasting truth of Baptism, and to repudiate the church as teaching thereby the abomination of baptismal regeneration—to wit, that every baptized person is in the act of baptism by the Holy Ghost possessed and inhabited—and they have succeeded in bringing that ordinance and covenant of God into a commonness, amongst those called the religious world, which grieves my spirit, and from which to deliver my flock hath cost me many laborious hours and days, yea, and years. And now, if you bring this charge home, they say, it is all done to give honour unto the Holy Ghost, to prevent men from over-estimating mere forms, and to teach them to look for the Divine work in their souls!—another proof of that delusion with which their eyes are covered, and which preventeth them from discerning the

church at all as a holy thing; as if they rather looked upon it as the source of mistake and error than as the medium of all blessings. And so have they brought it to pass, or at least done their utmost to bring it to pass, that the whole body of baptized persons should regard themselves as delivered from Divine obligation, and in the state of people first visited by a missionary; instead of being in the state of a people who, with their fathers, and their fathers' fathers, have been in covenant with God, and under obligations innumerable to the Gospel of his Son Jesus Christ: which, again, has deprived the pastor's office of its reverence and its holiness; deprived the church of its authority; and set all the relationships of life upon the basis of human law and expediency, instead of being rested upon the basis of Divine authority, Gospel ordinance, and church responsibility. But, still, these things they cannot discern, there is a blind upon their eyes: they see not the power of these ordinances, and yet they retain their form.—With respect to the desecration of the Lord's Supper, it hath been a crying sin in the land for a long season, yet never has been cried out against until the time came to commit another act of unholiness, by removing the magistrate from under the authority of Christ; and then, all at once there springeth up such a puritanical zeal as will last just until it hath accomplished the act of unchurching the nation, and

destroying all its sanctities in the sight of God: which really is Satan's arch-work, and methinks the consummation of hypocrisy—if, indeed, it do not escape out of that category into the category of infatuation and madness. If ever I knew infatuation, it is this act of the church, to cast away the holy supervision which the state had given her over its magistrates. It is also the height of ingratitude unto the state, to have thus refused to do for it the office of examining into the Christian principles and conduct of its magistrates. And, alas for the poor people, who have thus been forsaken by the church, their guardian mother, and left at the mercy of Socinian and Infidel rulers! But most of all the unholy act done under the shameless mask of holiness, affronteth my spirit the most, and maketh me blush, when I call myself any more a churchman. Truly, truly, they have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof.

9. "Without natural affection." This form of the natural soul, whereby it is linked in some relation or other to every living soul, and which by the second table of the law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," hath been sanctioned upon the highest possible authority, we shewed had become relaxed in these latter times in a great degree; as is evidenced by the diminished authority of parents over children, and the diminished duty of children to their parents: which evil the church, instead of attempting to remedy by enforcing

upon both the obligations of Baptism, she hath shamelessly undone that strong band, by holding little discourse concerning that mystery, and exercising little reverence in the ministration of the same. The church, indeed, hath stepped in with certain inventions of schools to remedy the evil; but this also is only a form without the power: for it is no longer the church's office of rearing up her catechumens unto man's full grown estate, but it is to give bare forms of reading the Scriptures, with as little instruction as possible upon the truth therein to be taught. There is no attempt to get at the soul of natural affection, and to work upon it by the Holy Ghost. There is no doctrine concerning it taught unto the parents; and, I may say, there is none taught unto the children; but the form which hath been got up of infant schools, and other schools, is cried up to heaven, while the power of natural affection is left to sicken and die. All this cometh of expediency; an expedient being the form of a thing good, and not the good thing itself. In like manner might I speak concerning the form in which Christian love expresseth itself towards the Heathen by means of missionary societies. To preach the Gospel unto the Heathen, is one of the acts of natural affection under the power of the Holy Ghost; but now, behold! if any one set forth in order, as I have done, the apostolical spirit of the missionary, and the difficulties which it will overcome through its great strength of love; if you endeavour to explain what a self-

denying thing Christian affection is, or in any way display its mighty power; then are they so dotingly set upon the form which they have set up, that they cry out with one accord, by the space—not of hours, but of years—"Great is Diana of the Ephesians." But if they loved the power of natural affection, they would not thus exclaim against a man who not only endeavoured to shew them the same, but denied himself so far to his own self-love, and love of approbation, as to rebuke them for it, while he endeavoured all he could to help them forward in the work. But they love the form of godliness and deny its power.

10. "Truce-breakers" we proved this generation to be, because they had taken away their eye from the ground of covenants altogether; neither caring to speak nor caring to hear concerning the covenant between the Father and the Son for the redemption of the elect, and all the mighty works which Christ by their means shall effect throughout eternity; neither caring to speak nor to hear concerning the covenant into which the members of Christ's church are brought towards God, and towards the holy laws of the Gospel, out of which cometh all discipline in the church and all the authority of the office-bearers thereof; neither hearing nor caring to hear concerning the covenant into which the king and all the estates of parliament, and all the rulers under the king, come unto Christ, the head of power, when he is crowned

in Christ's name, and Christ's religion is established in the kingdom : out of which comes all inheritance of God's favour and of God's providence by the nation,—peace at home, might abroad, with every other national blessing. Yet the forms of these things are in great repute. The atonement of Christ, Christ's life and death, which are the fruits of the everlasting covenant between the Father and the Son, is above all other things, and to the neglect of all other things, doted on. The form of a bishop's dignity is kept up in outward state, though the spirit of the bishop's office be, I think, gone for ever. And, I suppose, in the houses of our bishops—by whom I mean not the twenty-six men commonly so denominated, but all who, like myself, rule in word and doctrine—there is an outward reverence for the ordinances of the church, and for the ancient godly order of a bishop's family : which yet can consist with the manners and customs of fashionable life, and with the prostitution of the church's patrimony upon any and every object but that of piety, charity, and hospitality, for which it was intended. And in our presbyteries there is a prodigious reverence for forms, where the spirit is utterly departed, which I hold to be the essence of hypocrisy. Not that I would have the form departed from, as well as the spirit lost ; but that I would denounce as a hypocrite every man who walketh in the form of any covenant, when he hath departed and is departing from

the essence and spirit thereof. And, to turn from the church unto the state, was there ever such a splendid form of loyalty as at the coronation of our gracious king, in a time when the spirit of loyalty hath departed from the breasts of men, and the crown of majesty is stripped of its splendour; when no one will become his sovereign's minister, until he hath brought his sovereign under covenant and stipulation? And while my thoughts are turned this way, let me ask, moreover, what a splendid deception, what a solemn mockery, have those men who anointed our king, and those noblemen who saw him anointed; who, when he was crowned with the Protestant Christian crown, did set upon their own heads their hereditary coronets, to signify that in the same right in which he enjoyed his crown they did enjoy their various dignities: I say, what a solemn mockery they have made of that noble ceremony, in now, within these few months, permitting magistrates neither Protestant nor Christian to execute law and judgment; and, in truth, reducing the king to a lower level than his servants, swearing him upon the holy Gospels, and requiring him to take oath and sacrament, while others may be trusted without any such solemn pledges! The forms of ancient godliness are all standing—law will keep them standing—but the Spirit of holiness flowing from the church's ministry no longer magnifieth the people to the measure of the stately forms;

and so it cometh to pass that these forms make hypocrites of us all. What hypocrites do our ordination services make of us ministers of the Gospel! Look at our formula and confession of faith; look at the forms for the Ordination of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. What hypocrites do our Books of Discipline make of the members of the church! What hypocrites do the oaths and declarations against the Pope, and the daily services of the Houses of Parliament, make of the members thereof, who cannot by their absence shield themselves from the guilt! What hypocrites do the solemn openings of our courts of justice make of the ungodly men who oft administer and plead there! What hypocrites do the Christian forms of merchandize, and indentures of tradesmen, make of the classes who carry on our traffic! Oh, and there is no end of shewing what hypocrites our Apostolic church and Christian state maketh of us all: which hypocrisy the common feeling of honesty discerning amongst us, crieth out against these forms, saying, We can bear them no longer, they make hypocrites of so many; it is a desecration of the holy thing! Therefore, saith Puritanism, away with it, away with it, form and all. But Religion saith, Nay, verily; but let us lament ourselves, that we are so dwindled away in spirit as that these righteous, comely forms of church and state should have become a weariness and a condemnation. But Puritanism, supported by irreligion, gaineth the

day, and Religion is driven to the wall: and thus, under the pretence of godliness, you have another stone cast down from the godly building of our fathers: and so on it will go, for the time "to cast away stones" is come. But the singularity of the times is, that this work of casting down should go on under the pretence of godliness; and it can only be explained by the text, that they have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof.

11. The next characteristic, of false accusers—or rather, simply accusers—we shewed to be inherent in the very spirit of these times; wherein every ancient bulwark and protection of a man's character, which stood in the privacy of domestic life and the modesty of good manners, is wont to be torn aside by every malicious pander to the taste for novelty and excitement of whatever kind. And what is the colour under which these accusations are passed off and palmed upon the people? The common good, forsooth! the great benefit of public opinion to expose vice and hold up wickedness to scorn! Base hypocrisy! it is to feed the appetite of the people for scandal, and to make gain at their expense. But not in public newspapers and periodical writings, those receptacles of all anonymous accusations, need we look for this sign of the times, which is emblazoned in the fore-front of society itself; where, methinks, ninety-nine parts in an hundred of the discourse of men and women consists of retailed accu-

sations and charges against one another. Oh ! if there be a feature which marketh this age beyond every other, it is its readiness to take up an evil report. Oh ! if charity be that Divine grace which delighteth not in the evil, but in the good, then, alas ! how scanty it hath become in the church. And, methinks, that as the pretension to superior sanctity is more and more upheld, the atmosphere of accusation becomes more and more pernicious ; which proves hypocrisy to be present in this as in the other evil predicaments of the age : for they say, ' We have a character to support ; we are at the head of the church, or religious world : therefore let us sift him well ; for we have much to lose by being found with a suspected person in the midst of us.' Ye self-deluded Pharisees ! is this like Him who was the friend of publicans and sinners ; who received that wretched woman of whom Simon the Pharisee was ashamed, and forgave her much, because she loved much ? Thus it is ye are betrayed into the hands of reputable men, and forget the poor, and the needy, and the oppressed. But we shall yet see accusation of God's people, under the form of godliness, come to an higher pitch than it hath yet arrived at. Hitherto it has been confined to the writings of critics, who are not judges, as the name importeth, but accusers. If I err not, the time is coming, which already hath arrived in the Protestant churches abroad, when the faithful shall be brought be-

fore judges, and cast out of the sanhedrim, if not out of the land. I perceive a spirit of accusation, under the guise of orthodoxy and zeal for the church, shewing itself in size like a man's hand, which may yet overspread the whole heavens; and then will be seen, that what was done in France out of zeal to the commonwealth, may be done in England and in Scotland out of zeal for the church. God forbid that this prognostic should come true! But why to suffer for Christ's sake at the hands of our own household, and why the crown of martyrdom itself should be denied to us, I know not any cause, save our lukewarmness in our Lord's service, and our unworthiness of such preferment.

12. With respect to the next head, incontinent, or rather ungoverned—under which I shewed the weariness of government and discipline to which men had come, so that all authorities and office-bearers in church and state were fallen from their high estate, and for the most part treated as if they were suspicious names, ever to be watched, and never to be abused enough—I have now to shew the form of godliness which this vile spirit of Satan taketh to cloke itself withal. They call it the love of liberty! the exercise of our rights! the noble freedom of the conscience! The labour of our fathers in the church to repress unholy living by the rod of discipline, as well as to promote holy living by the ministry of the word and of ordinances, these unbroken and undisciplined

spirits call by the name of inquisitorial search and priestly dominion. The travail of our fathers to prevent schism in the land, and bring about uniformity of doctrine and worship and government, they characterise as narrow-minded bigotry; never recognising the great idea of the church's unity, which they were labouring to embody. And the whole subject of government, upon which our fathers spent so much labour of learning, argument, and construction, hath fallen into almost total oblivion and neglect. For why? They say, because we are more liberal than they. I say, because we are unruly, feeling not the need of government, and therefore not caring to know what sort of government is best. I have spent hours arguing, and idly arguing, with chief men, and pillars among the brethren, to shew that it was an evil thing to admit indiscriminately unto the table of the Lord. To such a state of ignorance in the matter of rule and government are we come, that the church hath, I may say, altogether forgotten her power of the keys, and looks upon it as a Papal superstition. And, verily, ye formalists, every thing is a Papal superstition which would put a meaning into the forms of government or the ordinances of worship in the church. If I preach the baptismal covenant, lo, it is called baptismal regeneration! if I preach the real presence unto faith of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist, lo, it is transubstantiation! if I preach the gift of the

Holy Ghost, needful to constitute a deacon, elder, or bishop, and the presence thereof unto faith in the act of ordination, lo, I am preaching ecclesiastical domination and official pride! and where it is to end, God only knows. There is a loosening of every joint, there is a creaking and giving of every timber, a starting of every pillar from its place and station, which bespeaketh a crazy frame and a speedy ruin. But, in civil matters, this ungoverned temper of the nation doth take such glorious forms of boastfulness as nothing can surpass, as hardly any thing can equal: it is the clearing away of rubbish from the goodly fabric of the state! it is the wiping away of shameful errors and solecisms from the statute-book! it is the grand march of reform! it is the omnipotent spirit of the age struggling against the prejudices of a thousand generations! Oh, what noble forms of virtue this impatience of government doth assume unto itself! Is it in your societies for the protection of religious liberty? then you shall find a reverence to the Established Church in the mouth, hatred against it rankling in the heart of the speakers. Is it in your societies for the abolition of Negro slavery? then you shall find the principles of equality speaking forth under that disguise. I say, there is a spirit gone abroad, which is labouring to dissolve all bonds of government, and which doth not fear to cloke itself with the names of religious and civil liberty, of benevolence unto all, and redemp-

tion to the oppressed. Aye, aye; and good people perceive not the snare of Satan, but hurry into it with unwary foot; and I fear God will give us up to our own headlong, headstrong lusts and inclinations.

13. The next feature, is fierce, or unmeek; which we have shewn to exist in those acrid humours and uncharitable actings of men to men; that sectarianism in the church, and partizanship in the state, and hard-mouthedness every where, which we have given ample proof of already. But, oh, to hear them speak of themselves, you would think the Saturnian age of men were restored again. They say, Behold how our ancient differences have disappeared; in what good temper we meet, and in what better temper we part! It is a compromise for the time being of your several principles. You seek honour one of another, you please and flatter one another: but if a man rise up in the midst of you, and shew you any short-comings or any error, where is your meekness then? A bear-garden, a mob, a mutiny, hardly equalleth your riot and your rage. I know this matter to the bottom. You will keep terms of truce with any one who will serve your ends; aye, and until your ends be served; and then to the winds of wild rumour will you cast his reputation, until he can do you service again. This is your meekness, this is your peace! Base and abominable hypocrisy! Moderation, said ye? meekness, said ye? Just so far as it is expedient,

and not a jot farther. Take the instance of the Bible Society question: was ever meekness so violated, was ever truth so wounded, was ever holiness so offended? O my God, what a blindness thou hast given us up to, that we should say the times are meek, and gentle, and charitable! The Lord deliver us from this delusion! or else we shall be awakened out of our fond dream by the fierce array and fiery contention of the evil spirits which are gone abroad, which are working in the vitals of the church and of the state.

14. Next in order comes the characteristic "despisers of those that are good," or, as we rendered and expounded it, "not lovers of the good;" exhibiting its existence in that devotedness to the useful and expedient, which hath taken precedence of submission to the lawful desire of the gracious, and devotion to the good. Yet, though the difference between the useful and the good be many degrees, as all antiquity and all Scripture doth demonstrate; yet it is most true, that in our times this distinction is wholly forgotten, and the useful is propounded as the only and the chief good: and thus it cometh to pass, that while they are consulting mere convenience, or at best immediate advantage, of themselves or others, they are deceived with the notion that they are following after what is good! And if you were to arise in the great councils of this Christian nation, or in the public meetings of

benevolent and religious societies, to assert that what is expedient or useful is not always lawful, and is commonly far from being good, the likelihood is, that you would be treated as a fool and suspected for a knave. With such veils doth the spirit of expediency, now at work, conceal the mystery of his iniquity.—“Not lovers of the good?” of what then lovers? Lovers of the rich, of the great, of the powerful. And for what end? Oh, all for their good! They will pay their court to professed infidels and notorious breakers of God’s commandments; they will sit with them, they will bear the reign of such a spirit in the companies which they frequent, all to do good! Nay, they will leave their own duties at home, their own charges in the church, and wander over the city and over the country in quest of good! To such an extent have men become blinded by the hypocrisy of the times, that when to a person of ordinary shrewdness they are manifestly indulging their own taste and humour, or cultivating the good opinion of the class in which they desire the uppermost room, in their own conception they are diligently hunting after what is good. Oh, how weary I am, even to think of what I have witnessed these many years of the abuse of this word good! If people have been pleased with a public report, or a public meeting, they say, what a good is doing! The good is measured by the enthusiasm of the multitude, or the glow of our own

feelings at the time, or the numbers of the pounds collected, or the nobleness of the men upon the platform, or the cleverness and glee of the speakers, or, in a rougher way, the briskness with which it all went off. For this state of things, formality and hypocrisy are not the proper names; it is delusion, downright deception and falsehood; and betokens an ignorance of the truth, an insensibility to the Spirit, which I find no expression equal to, but that of Scripture, given up to "believe a lie." Lovers of the good! To hear them talk, you would think there was nothing but good pursued by all men, from our ultra-liberals to our highest churchmen. All good men, according to their light! and most harsh it is to doubt that they have the common good at heart, and, in their way, all serving the common good. As to the old classifications of mankind current amongst our fathers,—men of pleasure, men of the world, men of humour, men of gain, honest men; all ranking under the degree of good men—which is the Scripture doctrine: "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet, peradventure, for a good man some would even dare to die"—all these distinctions have vanished from our philosophy and morals, and almost from our sermons. Usefulness is become goodness, and goodness is fallen into usefulness. The end is all: to trifle about the means shews a bad spirit, and great want of liberality. So thought and so acted the Jesuits long ago; until the

world, bad as it is, became too good for them; and the Catholic kingdoms of Europe, cold, cold as they are, became too hot for them.

15. The next feature of the last times is, that men shall be traitors—that is to say, deficient in trust-worthiness, and ready to speak out that which they should rather hold back. It does not mean that all men shall become traitors to the kings and kingdoms, which is only one form of the evil—though certainly one most widely disseminated in these times, when loyalty to the king is looked upon as an ignorant and evil prejudice, and attachment to the old laws and customs of the kingdom as a hereditary and antiquated folly. If we would see upon a large scale this form of the evil exemplified, look at the oaths and counter-oaths which the nations of Europe have taken to different kings, and temporary usurpers and leaders of revolution, and constitutions changing yearly. This surely is a new feature of man's character. There was a toughness and a tenacity about the character of our fathers, and of men in general in times past, which would not brook such changeableness, but would die rather. A kingdom is turned over to its greatest enemy without striking a blow. They could not make Scotland a province of England by ten centuries of warfare; and to root out the allegiance of Scotland to the Stuart family cost a long century of civil broils. But now, verily, all this is stigmatized by the name of legitimacy, and those who were

the objects of it are scorned by the opprobrious title of legitimates. Now, would they give to this feature of the times its proper name, and call the monarchs, who thus barter away the allegiance of their people unto a king whom neither they nor their fathers have served, unholy, ungrateful, and unworthy kings, 'twere well; but to call themselves a holy alliance, while thus they trample under foot the best and holiest affections of their people, is, I say, base hypocrisy, which no zeal against democracy and anarchy can justify. While, on the other hand, for those who hold up to contempt the principle of legitimate power and hereditary right, and laugh to scorn the generous attachment of a people to their line of kings and nobles; for such ignorant levellers to call this, as they do, philanthropy, liberty, and emancipation of men from brutal bonds, is, to say the best of it, base hypocrisy, which no degree of ignorance can at all palliate. Because a robber becomes so hardened as to regard the blood of a man as if it were the blood of a dog, are we therefore to pity him the more, and fear him the less? Surely, no: blame him the more, and spare him the less. So, because these philosophers of the French school have come to lose all conscience of natural and right feeling, or, where they have not lost it, to despise it as old men's dreams, and discourse of it as old wives' fables, are we to treat them leniently, or deal with them kindly, because they are be-

come irrational in their hearts, and use their heads to make others so? If it be not hypocrisy which makes them hide such treasonable thoughts under such loyal names, it is worse; it is self-delusion; it is the apostleship of falsehood. Now, touching the more common forms of betrayal of man's confidence—such as friendship—the shameless people will do it without a blush, and conceive it for the public weal that the private bond should be broken. That villanous standard of utility justifies every thing. 'Is it more useful, upon the whole, to give it to the winds? then let it be given. Do it anonymously, or any way you please: it is good service to the public.' No words can express the baseness, no calculations can estimate the amount, of the betrayals of trust which this generation hath been guilty of, beyond all others whereof there is any record. And yet the traitors take credit for it! they call it, devotion to truth! they call it, information of the people! they call it, hatred of quackery, and exposure of duplicity! But all these are nothing, compared with the treachery to great principles of faith which men are guilty of. The Athanasian Creed is a thing to mock at: all that divided the Church of England from the Remonstrants or Arminians, is now to be made light of. It is a proof of liberality, even to betray the Reformation itself, and to forget all the enormities of the apostasy in the zeal for Catholic emancipation. Emancipation! what

a lie is in that word ! as if you said to the prisoner, upon giving him two crusts for one to his meal, There now, there's liberty to thee ; while the man's irons clank on every limb in the inner dungeon of his prison-house. Emancipation, say they ? Wherein consisteth it ? in the tenant rising against his landlord, in the subject against his king, in the creature against his God, all to maintain cunning priests in their dark ascendancy over the soul of man, and to raise plotting agitators to ambitious places ? Methinks the hypocrisy of the spirit now at work were best shewn by the success with which it hath rooted up the foundations of our English tongue, and changed the very meaning of words ; calling black, white ; and bitter, sweet. " Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil ; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness ; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter."

16. The next feature of the times, is "heady," or precipitate, or forward : which may be seen in the rashness and speculativeness of the mercantile and trading community, in the undisciplined school-boy boldness of literary pretenders, who, with hardly the nomenclature of the subject, and certainly without the definition of the terms, will undertake the controversy with lettered and voluminous wisdom, and gain the victory in the course of a few paragraphs. This same precipitancy shews itself in the manners of men ; children being advanced to the place where youth

formerly stood in the calendar of human life, and youth into manhood; and as to the sage experience and narrative wisdom of age, it seems utterly gone. I see this forwardness and precipitancy in our courts of parliament, where a young man from the university starts at once to the helm of affairs, and guides the vessel of the state. This could not be, if there were any research, any reserved wisdom, which patient, temperate, thoughtful age is conversant withal. In law alone is this revolution in things not yet accomplished, because skill therein dependeth upon much reading and much experience. But I know well, that, in the church, the contempt poured upon scholastic learning hath brought us nearly to the same pass as in statesmanship; and in what is called literature, you find almost no growth nor maturity in the ideas of these overgrown children, who never come to manhood, but are like old women who affect the girl all their life: so do these triflers in Reviews and Magazines: they are as ripe at twenty as they are at forty, and at sixty they are generally dead. I wish I could conjure up the forms of Queen Elizabeth's statesmen, and set them over against the fore-bench of either side of our Houses of Parliament. I wish I could conjure up the race of our Reformers, and place them by the side of our popular preachers. The very figures of the men—their thoughtful faces, their capacious and wrinkled foreheads, their earnest air and serious aspect—would teach better than any

words how silly, saucy, pèrt, petulant, forward, and hasty the intellect and character of men have now become. Truly, a heady race we are; full of vapours and fancies, giddy and vain and empty. I have oft compared the lusty folios which our fathers wrote on every subject, with the pattern-book which half a dozen of modern wits produce by the quarter or by the year. They say, it was the lengthiness of our fathers: it is false, it was their fruitfulness; for one of their sentences, yea, oftentimes of their words, hath more meaning in it than a whole essay or discourse of modern times. No: the difference is as between an apple-tree in its second or third year, and the same tree full grown and full bearing. The forwardness of men now-a-days makes them complete in self-conceit, when they are not yet fledged in reason; and, despising all further attainments, they go on repeating themselves, like a parrot: which is not a reasonable and eloquent orator because it can chatter many hours in the day. This is a feature of the times which I know well, and from the family likeness of which I have striven hard to escape; for the children of my Alma Mater, which is no mean university neither, are all strongly stamped with this uncomely feature. And now, under what fair pretension and flattering guise may this ugly feature of the age hide itself? what alias, what good name, may it please its vanity withal? One of the specious names is, the march

of intellect; another is, the diffusion of knowledge; and a third, this enlightened age. Because an apprentice can babble of liberal opinions, and retail the slander of the public prints against every thing good and great; because a sempstress can prattle of poems and novels and reviews; and because the workman can retail some incoherent scraps of mechanical lectures; the age is called enlightened, and intellect is thought to have taken a great step in advance, and knowledge to be diffused abroad. In like manner may it be said that the waters of the reservoirs which drive the machinery and do the work of the kingdom were diffused abroad, if they were let out from their channels over the fertile fields. Is it not known unto you, is it not known unto you, O foolish men! that knowledge puffeth up, but charity buildeth up; that it is not knowledge in itself, but as the guide and wise husbander of good and charitable feelings, which blesseth either him that possesseth it or those with whom he hath to do? To possess knowledge, without the means of expressing it and bringing it into effect, is the most painful and unhappy of all predicaments: therefore God hath not communicated knowledge, as it were, indiscriminately; but ordained in his church, ministers, to this effect; and in families, fathers, to the same effect, who may instruct their children; and in the business of life, masters, who may instruct the youth; and so on throughout the

various chambers of social life it is ordained, that there should be teachers and taught, instructors and instructed. But I fear this ordinance, upon which the dignity of wisdom and the authority of office resteth, and upon which also the gratitude and the happiness of the people rest, is fast failing, if it be not wholly failed, from the people; and a state of things is fast coming into being, which acknowledgeth no deference of the untaught to the taught, of the ignorant to the wise, of the young to the old, of the generation that now is to the generations that went before it: and this they call the march of intellect. If that expression meaneth any thing, it must mean that intellect is making progress amongst us, or that the understanding of man is taking a larger compass than it did heretofore. I ask for the proofs of this: what works of any dimension of mind have we produced? what philosophy is there taught amongst us? what morals, what divinity? Is it by the republication of old books, or by the publication of new ones, that we live? What poets, of any genial spirit or high nobility of mind, possess we? and what relish or reward is there for those inheritors of the true poetical and philosophical spirit which we do possess? A newspaper paragraph will at any time beat down a sage, in the judgment of this enlightened generation. But I am weary of this controversy, and I hasten to be done with it. It is vanity and self-conceit which hath intoxi-

cated men : and God hath given us up to believe a lie—which is, that all is light, when all is darkness; fulfilling the word of the Lord spoken by Amos, v. 20 : “ Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light; even very dark, and no brightness in it?”

17. The next characteristic of the evil times is “high-minded,” or inflated, swollen, puffed up: which is manifested in that spirit of boasting of ourselves which is gone abroad, as if there never were such times as our times, such men as ourselves. This self-conceit leadeth to the most erroneous judgments that can well be conceived: of which, in political things, one is, that liberty is about to obtain a signal triumph over all the world; and in religious matters, another is, that the whole world is just on the eve of being converted. So doth a drunken man think that he could slay a host, and a vain man fancy himself the object of the world’s admiration. In like manner they are dreaming that the people are in the way of becoming either all saints, or all sages. They talk of the wondrous inventions for teaching men, the improvements introduced into our schools and seminaries of youth, and the wonderful progress of society towards amelioration: and what is the origin and meaning of these strange notions? the answer is, the people are puffed up, and filled with vain dreams: their self-conceit would have it so, and therefore they say it is so. In two things, indeed, I allow that this age excelleth: the one is, in mecha-

nical inventions ; the other is, in the critical discernment and exposure of each other's frailties ; that is, in physical power and in malice. Now, when great physical power is directed by malice, what must the end be, but mutual destruction ? Our knowledge is all turned towards the attainment of power over physical matter ; our literature is almost all turned towards the discernment and exposure of defects, in the church, in the state, in one another. All reverence is destroyed, all duty is subverted ; the power to hurt is multiplied a thousand-fold ; and what the end will be, it is easy to discern. Yet do the infatuated people dream of halcyon days, and talk of excellent doings ; and thus over the face of the volcano there hath been drawn a deceitful verdure, that the people may lie down in safety, and perish, as it were, in a night. There is a form of godliness over the surface of things, beneath which Satan is working the more securely.

18. They profess the love of God, but secretly they are "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God," which is the last characteristic of the evil times,—their love of pleasure, in preference to their love of God. Man must have something to love ; and the lowest thing upon which he can set his heart, is pleasure ; the highest, is God. Now, how much men have become lovers of pleasure, let the various inventions to please the sense bear witness : for the word "pleasures," in the original, is "sweets," or "sensual delights." Now,

compare present with former times, and see how far we surpass every age in the entertainments and the enjoyments of the sense. What is the spending of a winter in this city, but the dedicating of so many months, day and night, to the enjoyments of the sense? For which hot and feverish life, all duties of rank, all obligations of riches, all honours of large estate, all enjoyments of the peaceful and beautiful country, all offices to the poor and needy dependants of our bounty, are foregone and forsaken, to enjoy the sweets of the sense, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life:" nay, and, if information make me not to err, not only the duties of mothers, but the very hope and desire of a mother, violently and voluntarily made away with, in order to be able for such a giddy round of wickedness. And yet these fashionable people would take it very much amiss if you were to say that they were not Christians, but worse than Heathens, in their way of life: they keep the form, but deny the power of godliness. Ancient simplicity of life is, I may say, departed from almost all classes. And religion hath become indulgent to the growing luxury: against horse-racing, and theatres, and balls, it lifteth up a loud voice; but there it seemeth to stop. And methinks it is rather the outward form than the inward evil of these things which it discerneth; for I do find the same irregular hours, the same splendour of dress and equipage, the same lavishness of

expense in entertainments; in one word, the same pleasing of the sense—and I may add also, the same spirit of censure and judgment—amongst their own companies, as amongst those which they repudiate: it is the same thing under a new form: it is the world become religious, but the world still; and therefore well denominated the religious world. Now, amongst the common people, I very much mistake indeed if the Methodist discipline be not accomplishing the very same effect, of giving a form of godliness without its power. There is a discipline without a doctrine; and nothing but a doctrine hath power over the heart. Discipline hath power only over the outward form of life, save when walking by the side and in the light of holy doctrine. And that awful and unspeakable error, of being in Christ one day and out of him another, doth open the door to such uncertainty, changeableness, and fallibility, and must necessarily be met in practice with such a system of confession and purgation and dispensation, as must make sinning and repenting, sinning and repenting, the very order and condition of a religious life. Moreover, the great ignorance which I have found co-existing with great profession, amongst the common people, doth satisfy me, that within the intimacies and intricacies of that body there must be the toleration of great abuses. I express my fear that here, also, there is much of the form of

godliness without its power, and a love of pleasure rather than of the word of God.

— As my chief object in this discourse is to open unto the more zealous and lively part of the church the mystery of iniquity which is working in the midst of them, I shall be at a little more pains to shew out the hypocrisy under which the love of pleasure veils itself in that religious world to which they belong. To this end, I would shew them this love of pleasure working under that style of religious society they delight in, and to which they enter every new convert; where, excepting cards and dice and dancing, there exist all the elements of pleasure which can exist in any style of society the most dissipated: the same unseasonable hours, breaking up domestic economy and family duties, piety and religion; the same gay equipages, exposing man and beast to the same perils of the unseasonable night, if not morning; the same adorning of the person and broidering of the hair and wearing of apparel; the same crowding after religious notables, and vain retailing of what they said and did: in one word, the same love of pleasure, but covered over and disguised with the name of the love of God. To bring the contrast completely out, it will be necessary to relieve this picture, from the sober back-ground of what the pious in former times were wont to follow after and aim at in their

social intercourse. I am not so well acquainted with the unrecorded customs of England in the last and former ages, but of Scotland I can say, that for a father or a mother to be away from the head of their family at the hour of evening worship, would have been reckoned a scandal almost calling for the interference of the Kirk Session. I know also, that once in the week, or so, the heads of families in the street of a town, or in a glen of the country, would assemble, for two or three hours of an evening, in what were called fellowship-meetings, for the good end of exercising each other's gifts in the word, in discourse, and in prayer. But mothers would abide at home, waiting upon the house, nursing and edifying the children, overlooking the servants, and seeing that all things were managed without waste, in a creditable and orderly manner; that there might be a good account rendered of her husband's earnings to her husband; from whom, in return, she expected, in their own private intercommunion, an account to be rendered of whatever most instructive and edifying might have occurred at the meeting of the brethren. In this way families in Scotland were wont to be reared up, and in this way was religious society wont to be conducted. Furthermore, if you would wish me to conduct you into the interior of one of these fellowship-meetings, I shall tell you how it fell out to myself, once upon a time, when passing through one of the lonely water-courses of my native land. The

house at which I rested was the house of a farmer, an elder also of the congregation; and the evening was the evening of a fellowship-meeting, which circled round amongst the families in the little glen. The heads of families being assembled about six o'clock in the evening, seated themselves in the opposite end of the house from that where the industry of the family was proceeding. The family Bible was spread before the master; who, having selected a portion of David's Psalms, they praised the Lord together; and, having kneeled down to seek his holy presence, and entreat his favour upon their present meeting, the subject upon which they had agreed at the last meeting to discourse together was by the master proposed to his brethren; being that night, The godly use of affliction. Whereupon, the goodman of the house putting it to them, and gently pressing some one to begin, they opened their minds with godly simplicity, like men full of both the word and the Spirit. They had no Bibles with them, save that family Bible which lay before the master: the word was written in their hearts, it was ready on their lips; and they spake in confidence of the Spirit, not nicely to criticise, nor to suspect one another of partiality in handling the word, nor to shew off new interpretations, but to tell to one another the comfort and edification which they had experienced from such and such declarations of the Holy Ghost: and if peradventure any one wished the context to be

read, or the word to be more accurately reported, reference was made to the written word. This exercise of holy conversation having been kept up for two hours, or thereby, the rest of the family, mistress and servants, and such of the children as were not gone to rest, were called in, and the goodly company joined together in an act of family worship, conducted by some one of the brethren according to the good order of our church: after which, about nine o'clock, not later, the patriarchs of the glen or water-course departed unto their several homes and habitations, to meditate another subject against their next fellowship-meeting. Compare this, which was the custom of the former age amongst religious people, with the present luxurious dinner entertainment, followed by the gay evening, or rather night assemblage, relieved by the entertainment of an exposition from the favourite minister upon his favourite theme, and a short prayer. This, I say, compare with the other rational, self-denying, God-glorifying ordinance; and you may chance to catch a notion how much men have become lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, and used the name and form of godliness to disguise and conceal the love of pleasure.

Now, let us take a view of the same thing as it is exhibited in the religious literature—that is, in the books which satisfy the desires and gratify the inclinations of religious people. Of all the reading of the religious world, at least one-half,

I might say two-thirds, consisteth in periodical publications, or the reports of societies, or the narratives of missionary labours ; all connected with the present time, with living persons, with favourite objects ; having the excitement of novelty and the entertainment of story ; not to speak of the large mixture of compliment and flattery to those religious men and religious societies with which we have identified ourselves, and in whose celebrity our celebrity liveth. That the providence of God over his church in all parts of the world ought to be a subject of a Christian's observation and knowledge ; that it should be exactly and fairly reported, and diligently meditated by all God's people, is never to be doubted : but that the few things of a favourable kind should be presented in many forms, while the many signs of God's withdrawing from and visiting upon the church should be suppressed, is dealing by the Providence of God deceitfully, and ill discharging the office of chroniclers to the church : of which unfaithfulness, arising no doubt from want of discernment, and the love of being deceived with smooth tales, I do solemnly charge the periodical writers of the religious world. And, besides, I say, that the establishment of every new school or auxiliary society, at home and abroad ; the narrative, the journal, and the diary of every missionary abroad, or every traveller for missions at home ; that the actings, for example, of a bishop in the

visitation of his diocese in foreign parts, and all the other minute novelties with which these periodical writings are filled ; are neither profitable for those of whom they are written, nor profitable for those by whom they are read ; but calculated to give an exaggerated idea and factitious importance to little things, and to keep up a feverish excitement, and to gratify an idle curiosity with minute matters, and to dissipate the mind, and gratify the lowest propensity for religious news. It is the love of entertainment, the love of pleasure, under the guise of religion, which hath begun and keepeth up this active intercourse between the religious press and the religious world : and well am I convinced, that against deep and heart-searching truth nothing at this day makes so powerfully as these religious periodical writings ; from which sift out the news, and the uncharitable severities, and the unprofitable memoirs of unprofitable persons, and the condemnation of books neither reviewed nor read by those who judge them, and what have ye left ?—nothing at all.

I point out, as another mark of the love of pleasure under the disguise of religion, that swarm of religious novels which within the last age have overspread the church. In former times, there was such a nice regard for truth in every thing religious, that when a man ventured upon an allegory, such as the *Pilgrim's Progress*, he did it with fear and trembling, and with a formal apology unto the church and submission

to her censure ; of which you may see a pleasant example in the author's apology for his book, prefixed to the Pilgrim's Progress. But as to the spurious intermixture of the novel with spiritual religion, it was left to this age to naturalize such a monster. Now, this mixture of reality and fancy—or, I may say, falsehood—hath descended down to tracts, in which, professedly and avowedly, the truth is diluted by some fiction, or half-fiction, in order to gratify the love of pleasure, and find access, through that idolatry of the lowest kind, unto the fear and love and worship of the true God. How far otherwise the manner of The Teacher, who, upon a time when a great multitude followed his footsteps, turned round upon them, and said, “If a man would be my disciple, he must hate his father, and his mother, and his brother, and his sister, and take up his cross, and follow me !” I hold that there is no courtiership in the declaration of the Gospel ; which makes its court by the magnificence of God's acts, and the munificence of his love in Christ Jesus, and by the faithful representation which it makes of the ignorance and wickedness of every man. It doth not build up evil affections, which it may afterwards cast down ; but it casteth them down, that it may build up good ones in their stead ; and to the love of pleasures, be they pleasures of the imagination, or pleasures of the fancy, or pleasures of the sense, or pleasures of the natural man in

general, it maketh no suit whatever; but with severe countenance rebukes, and with righteous judgment condemns them all: at the same time making assurance, that in their stead an hundred-fold of spiritual and holy affections of the heart and forms of the understanding will be given in their room, to exercise themselves—not upon falsehoods, or man's many inventions, but—to exercise themselves upon the height and the depth, the length and the breadth, the beauty, and the variety, and the excellency, and the blessing, of the love of God in Jesus Christ. It is true, and well worthy of observation in this place, that, such is the poverty of our present writers and preachers in every thing, save the department of religious news and religious fictions, that the life of the body of Christ in these times is fain to seek its support from the writings of a former age; chiefly from the Puritan divines, whereof so many republications have taken place in these days. And here, while I express my regret that they do not ascend still higher up the stream, and drink from the purer fountain of the Reformation divinity, I cannot help remarking the wonderful recompence which God, after many generations, hath awarded to those conscientious, yet often over-scrupulous, men, whom the church cast out of her bosom, and the law brought into fearful straits, in that their works, the offspring of their stedfast faith and sore experience, have now been reclaimed by that very

church which cast out the workmen; and her famished children do now feed from the breasts of those whom she heretofore banished from her house. In this I rejoice: but I cannot help remarking, as rather mingling trembling with my joy, that these republications of our Puritan divines are accompanied by commendatory essays from the idols of the people; which maketh me oft to fear, when I witness the influence of names in all other quarters of the religious world, that it is the editor and introducer of these ancient worthies, rather than the taste and relish and feeling of their own worth, which finds such ready and extensive circulation for their long-neglected treatises: for this I know full well, that, when the same truths contained in them are preached, they find the steadiest opposition from the religious world and their idol ministers. Nevertheless, because charity hopeth all things, and rejoiceth in the good rather than the evil, I do rejoice to hope, and have some ground to believe, that this excellent seed, and the still more excellent seed of the Reformation, is beginning to bear the fruit, in a chosen few, of a larger, more manly, more bold, more faithful spirit. If that truth, still higher than either the Reformers or the Puritans knew, but which the holy Prophets and the Apostles of the Lord and the primitive church well knew, and lived upon, shall find a root, and bring forth fruit, it may prevail unto the salvation of the church from the confederacy

of the spirit of Cain, the spirit of Balaam, and the spirit of Korah, which now threateneth both church and state with overthrow.

It remains, that I point out another form of the love of pleasure in preference to the love of God ; which is to be found in that mixture of personal gratification with religious improvement which every where aboundeth. For example, in excursions of pleasure in numerous companies, which I have been ashamed to see posted in the public streets, at so much a head, to Richmond, or to the Nore, or some other pleasant resort, all for the benefit of some religious society ! Public dinners also, with rousing speeches, for the same : sales of ladies' work for religious purposes, and consisting of all manner of curiosities, elegancies, vanities, and oddities, such as a Bazaar might parallel, but certainly not surpass. Again ; I observe the same intermingling of pleasure, gain, and religion in strange confusion, in those excursions amongst the churches for raising money by the abuse of preaching ; where a regular bargain is struck—every meal allowed for, whether partaken at the inn or of hospitality ; travelling expenses by the mile allowed, which do not preclude the visiting of curiosities by the way, of beautiful romantic scenes, and all other natural scenery, with the love of which this age is gone mad—as if, which indeed they little know or think upon, they were taking a fond farewell, a longing, lingering look

of it, before it be all changed, like a vesture—or rather, shall I say, that their punishment may be enhanced the more, for setting their affections upon the creature's weakness and bondage, instead of looking forward and praying for the creature's emancipation, deliverance, and glory? Much more could I say concerning that love of pleasure under the guise of godliness, which hath won the mastery of this self-indulgent and luxurious society called the Religious World: out of which I would summon every man who would be a man of war for Christ, and do exploits against the enemy; for certes there is such a mixture of contraries, such a truce between the world and the church, and such an indecision of principles, insufficiency of knowledge, and feebleness of action, there prevailing, that I augur no good from that encampment, when the heat of the campaign ariseth, and the enemy beginneth to be felt: unto whom the Lord seems to speak as he spoke to Gideon of old:—"The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from Mount Gilead: and there returned of the people twenty and two thousand, and there remained ten thousand. And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down

unto the water, and I will try them for thee there : and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee ; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. So he brought down the people unto the water : and the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself ; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. And the number of them that lapped, putting their hands to their mouth, were three hundred men : but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped, will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand : and let all the other people go every man unto his place. So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets : and he sent all the rest of Israel every man unto his tent ; and retained those three hundred men.

But, I confess, there is another form of this hypocrisy, which lately hath sprung up, that strikes me as the most barefaced of all ; and the acceptance which it received from the religious people, is to me a proof that hypocrisy is the order of the day : I refer to the spirit of respect for religion which was manifested of late upon the occasion of the London University, and the repeal of the Test and Corporation

Acts, by men who had been notorious all their lives for the neglect and contempt, not to say open defiance and steady opposition, of religion; but all of a sudden they become the guardians of religious purity and liberty of conscience! 'Religion,' say they; 'ah yes! dear brethren, religion is too holy a thing to be meddled with by a university, or by the government of a country. Fain would we see it flourish, and fain would we promote its weal; but we have too much respect for it to meddle with its sanctity, and therefore we leave it to itself!' Upon which the people shout, "It is the voice of a god." And, again, the men who have been administering the sacrament to all comers during all the years of their ministry; and the men who have such a reverence for the sacrament as, perhaps, not to have partaken of it for many years, if ever at all, and to whom certainly I would sooner lose my right hand than administer it, until they mended their manners and wholly changed their way of life; yet all of a sudden do these clergymen and laymen, seized with the spirit of hypocrisy tenfold, cry out, 'Oh, how holy is the sacrament! and what an awful profanation of it has been going on in the land! Let us be guiltless of this for the time to come; and rather let us choose magistrates who are atheists or deists, than sin thus against the holy ordinance of God!' and straightway the hypocrisy-approving religionists call them their liberators, their deliverers,

their best friends, entertaining them with festal banquets, and honouring them to occupy the chair at their religious meetings! Oh, what hypocrisy! what countenance of hypocrisy! Truly, O Lord, we have forgotten thee: we have put our trust in thine enemies, and we are confederate with those that are confederate against thee and against thine Anointed. Yet is it of thy mercies that we are permitted to reveal our wickedness in these hideous forms, to the end, that, being warned of the abounding iniquity, no longer concealed, we may separate ourselves from such deceitful and deceived men, and join ourselves unto "Him who is faithful and true," and who will be unto his people for a Refuge in the day of these judgments, and in the day of our fearful calamity.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE WHOLE DISCOURSE:

ADDRESSED, I. TO THE CHURCH; II. TO THE STATE;
AND, III. TO MY OWN FLOCK.

WE have thus endeavoured patiently to point out the various forms of hypocrisy which this spirit of the latter times assumeth; directing our chief attention to the most zealous and lively portion of the church, upon the principle, that whatever is most precious is most worthy to be guarded against the designs of the adversary. I fear, indeed, that all which can be spoken to them in this strain of suspicion and warning, especially by one who is no favourite or idol of theirs, will chance to fail of obtaining a hearing, much more an assent, from the Religious World; which certainly has this distinction above all other sects or parties in the church, and I may say in Protestant Christendom, at any time, that they are the most under the spirit reproved by our Lord in these words, "How can ye believe which seek honour one of another!" and reproved by Isaiah in these words, quoted by our Lord, "Their fear of me is taught by the

precepts of men." Yet, nevertheless, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear, it is surely the part of every one who loves them, to shew forth fully and fearlessly the evil which threatens them. Therefore, let us now resume the thread of our discourse, and, according to the good old method, conclude with an improvement of the whole matter. And, seeing that my discourse hath addressed itself in its highest bearing to the church of Christ, of which I am a minister; and in its next, to the state, under which I am the minister of an established church; and lastly, to the congregation and flock of which I am a pastor, I shall divide this improvement into three parts: the first addressing itself to the church, the second unto the state, and the third unto my own flock and congregation.

I. I am more willing to attribute the sins of the Protestant Church, which I have pointed out, to ignorance, rather than to wilful and obstinate transgression; and this, notwithstanding that in the preceding discourse I have pointed out and demonstrated the fact of her hypocritical and pharisaical state. I would therefore set myself to exhibit before the church some of those great heads of Divine knowledge, through ignorance or neglect of which Satan obtaineth such an easy prey, and taketh her with such flimsy pretences. For few people, comparatively speaking, are hypocrites by design, and such a character can hardly be

predicated of a whole community at once. The greater part of those symptoms of an apostasy which I have pointed out above are not known to the generality of those whom I have charged with them: it hath crept on unawares, and now influences the whole body; of which the greater part have known no better; and, until their knowledge be increased, there can be little hope of their ever discerning, much less acknowledging, the evil condition which belongeth to them. I would therefore point out one or two quarters, in which they would do well to inform themselves better. And, first, they should give themselves to search into the power of that godliness whereof they have the form. The power of godliness is to overcome the devil, the world, and the flesh: not to make these three enemies friendly, but to master and subdue them. The influence of the devil over human affairs is little discoursed of, and to combat with him is little undertaken; yet is he the prince of the darkness of this world, the spirit which now ruleth in the children of disobedience. With what levity do we mention his name, who once had us all, and still hath the myriads of our race, under his thralldom! It was not the way with the Apostles thus lightly to deal with, thus silently to pass over, his influence: who said, "We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with the rulers of the darkness of this world, and with spiritual wickednesses:" and again; "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you:" and again;

“ Taking the shield of faith, that ye may be able to quench the fiery darts of the devil :” and again ; “ For the devil as a roaring lion goeth about, seeking whom he may devour.” Our Lord’s chief combat was with the devil : “ The devil cometh,” saith he, “ and findeth nothing in me....Now is the prince of this world cast out.” His death, saith the Apostle, was to “ destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” And another Apostle says, “ He came to destroy the works of the devil.” In like manner, the chief combat of the first martyrs and confessors was with the devil : “ They overcame him with the word of their testimony.” The great triumph of Christ, at his second coming, consisteth in ridding the earth of the devil. Moreover, we do find the devil arrayed against the church from the beginning, and using, first, the Imperial strength of Rome (Rev. xii.) against the woman ; then the flood of Arian nations (verse 15) ; then the Papal imperial beast (Rev. xiii. 2) ; then the beast from the bottomless pit (Rev. xvii.) who brings up the array of nations to do battle against the Lamb. And we find, immediately before that battle all the three spirits go abroad together, and work amain to bring about that great confederacy : which threefold labour of temptation and seduction almost all interpreters of the Divine prophecy are agreed to place this generation under ; and yet, behold, the church is in such a state of security and joy as the Millennium itself will hardly see surpassed ! No

temptations of Satan do they see, no mysteries of iniquity working. One would think that Satan had gone to sleep, or that he was already bound, so little discourse is there of his wiles, so little apprehension of his presence. Truly, it is taken in the light of a slander, and mocked at as a folly, if you ever hint to the religious that Satan is as busy leavening them as ever he was with the primitive church. But, in the name of common sense, not to say religion, what protection hath England or Scotland against the activity of that spirit which hath subverted all the Protestant churches on the Continent? Lutheran is no charm against Satan, nor is Calvinistic, nor is Arminian, as the churches of Saxony, Geneva, and Holland testify. And that Dissenter is not, the Huguenot churches do testify. But in the Religious World of Britain there is such obstinate ignorance, that they will not believe that they are in danger from Satan, though an angel from heaven should come and tell it them. And this I take to be the first great cause of their present hypocrisy: they are in love with a lie. The lie is, that all is safe, that all is well; to this lie their writers and speakers minister unwittingly: and a blind person may be easily led, for what can he say who seeth nothing?

The second form of their ignorance, is ignorance of the world; taking it for something which may be, by proper management, tamed into a conformity unto the mind and will of God. The poor novices do think that this present state of

the world will by natural causes grow into the Millennium, just as a wilderness by human culture grows into a fruitful field. I could almost break my heart, when I witness their devotedness to this fearful error, and consider whither it is to lead them. Ignorant men! the world is already judged, is already condemned; and one part of our vocation, as ministers of the Gospel, is to "reprove the world of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." Did not Satan himself say, when he shewed the Lord the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, "All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them, for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it?" Do we not find the Apostle saying, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed, by the renewing of your minds?" Doth not our Lord set his people in direct contradiction with the world, saying, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you?" And is not Satan called the prince of this world? and is not the course of this world said to be according to the prince of the power of the air? and is not Satan, the Dragon, the Serpent, declared to be the animating principle in those several confederacies of the world against Christ? How then, I ask, dare they call themselves the Religious "world?" It is a scandal to the English tongue, our honest

mother tongue, to have made it lie so egregiously as in that word it doth. How, in the face of all Scriptures, can they believe that the world will be any better, but rather will grow worse and worse, until Satan be cast out of it? and when he is cast out, it will be with rendings, and writhings, and breakings-up of nature. With such a spirit in it, how can they think to establish a millennium upon it? Doth not the Apostle John say, that “the world and the fashion of it passeth away;” and all the Scriptures testify that “it shall be changed like a vesture, and removed?” After which, we find it likewise continually stated, that it shall not be removed for ever: which change in the world is effected at the time of the casting out of Satan, which is before the Millennium. By looking upon the world itself as to be converted in the mass; instead of looking upon it as the mass out of which the children of God are to be chosen and drawn forth, and which, after it has yielded the appointed number of God’s elect, shall be destroyed by the righteous judgment of God—out of which act, at once of destruction and renovation, shall come forth the habitation of the risen saints and the sojourners in the flesh whom God spareth from the catastrophe—it cometh to pass, that they are seduced, by their very benevolence towards men and zeal towards God, to work against the stream of his purpose, and shall be found opposed to him in the day of his appearing.

Forgetting that trial of fire which every man's work is to endure, they are building upon the foundation of the church, hay, wood, stubble, and other destructible materials of the world: and they say one to another, as they build, 'Behold how the building groweth into an house!' but it is an house which will be consumed in the day of the Lord. This cometh out of ignorance of the doctrine of election—or, I may say, the doctrines of grace in general—concerning which more hereafter.

The third enemy, of whose incurable malice and ungodly nature the church at present is but little aware, is the flesh—that is, the natural man, the fallen creature—which is enmity unto God, and is not subject unto the law of God, neither indeed can be. This doctrine, of the incurable ungodliness of the natural man, is taught to us in the sacrament of Baptism, which signifieth the death of the natural unto the life of the spiritual creature. But, because the sacrament of Baptism is totally rejected and disbelieved in as a mystery of grace, it cometh to pass, that the doctrine of the law of the flesh is no longer understood; but, like the world, of which it is the ruler, man's fallen nature is thought capable of regeneration without a previous death: it is thought possible to wash the Ethiopian white. Therefore a certain law and licence is given to the workings of natural feeling, an authority and indulgence to the powers of the natural understanding, and a favour shewn for the

accomplishments of the natural mind and the accommodations and expedients of natural life—in one word, a compromise with the world and the men of the world, and, which is worse, with ourselves, stealeth over us, and worketh in us all manner of equivocations, errors, and hypocrisies. Whereas, if the separateness of the church were believed in, and the complete contradiction of the spiritual and natural man, it would come to pass then, instead of leaning towards, we would incline away, at all times, from the wickedness which is in the fallen creature in his best estate: and so it would necessarily come about, that we should be found faithful and true witnesses for the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and of all who believe in his name; for the present life and future judgment of Satan and this world, and all that submit to his principdom. Now, forasmuch as I believe that God is glorified by our faithful witness for his Son against Satan, and for the regeneration against the world, I have no doubt that he is well-pleased where such a broad, distinct, and full testimony, by loss of good name, loss of goods, loss of life, is borne; even as he ill-pleased, and full of wrath, on account of that equivocal, indistinct, and much to be mistaken testimony which is borne by those who are in quest of honour, wealth, dignity, and worldly preferment. And as to the former he will come, in their day of greatest strait, with deliverance and salvation; so to the

latter, in their greatest glory, fullest estate, and fairest name, will he come with utter and everlasting destruction: according as it is written, Psalm xxxvii. 35—37; “I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree: yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.”

32 This leadeth me to observe a second cause of that direful apostasy unto the end of which we are near arrived; which is, ignorance of the nature of a church—or, I should say, of *the* church—which, on the one hand, the Papists make visible; and, on the other hand, the Evangelicals make nothing at all. Now, the church, in the light in which it hath been viewed by all orthodox divines, is nothing else than a symbol or visible representation of the invisible body of Christ, the church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven: and, according to the law of God’s ordinances, he who will not study the symbol, and give it due reverence, shall never come to the understanding or to the enjoyment of the thing, the invisible reality, which it representeth. As the washing with water is not the regeneration of the Holy Ghost, but that in the right using of which faith may, and ought, stedfastly to look for the regeneration of the Holy Ghost: so is the visible church, its unity of faith, its exercise of dis-

cipline, its worship, and its government, not the invisible body of Christ, but that outward form and symbol thereof, in the right use of which alone can the benefits of the invisible church be obtained, possessed, and enjoyed. For want of respect unto—I may say, want of apprehension of—this ordained connection between the visible and the invisible, as necessary, in my opinion, to the life of the church, as to the life of man is the union of body and soul, it hath come to pass, and must needs always come to pass, that what forms of religion remain in use are merely as forms used, and not looked upon as full unto faith of a holy spiritual substance: and thus hypocrisy in its worst form—which is, the using of God's signs as if they signified nothing gracious, but were at best equivocal, and commonly unfruitful—is introduced, and becomes in a manner licensed, yea, and even sanctified. Insomuch, that if you speak of the church and to the church as a company of believers, and of Baptism as a spiritual death and resurrection, and of the Lord's Supper as an eating and a drinking into the true spiritual invisible body of Christ, and of preaching as the voice of the Spirit to the church, and of ordination as the communication by the Holy Ghost of the several gifts necessary to the office-bearers of the church, they lift up their hands, and say, What hideous errors! what enormous superstitions! what abominable heresies! Which is to say, for their own parts

they regard them in no such light. And yet I say, and fearlessly put it forth as the truth of God, that for these ends of grace the ordinances are the appointed and efficacious means to every believer; and that he who looketh not upon them as such, is a perverter, a denier of God's ordinances; which if he nevertheless continue to use, then is he found a hypocrite, a dissembler even unto God himself. Would that it had fallen into other hands to wage this controversy; but, seeing I am thus called unto it, I will not flinch from its ruggedness and its risk; and do solemnly charge the church called Evangelical, or Religious World, with the most church-destroying, church-extinguishing spirit which the world hath ever seen, in that they are labouring to bring it to pass that the holy ordinances of the church should become null and void. And it will be seen yet, in this land, that when they are joined hand in hand with the liberal and infidel party of the state, the High Church—or I would rather call it the Church of the Reformation—will be witnessing, perhaps bleeding, for the truth. Is it any thing to comfort me, in this despite of God's ordinances, to talk like fools or infatuated persons about the Bible, while they despise and slight that living church for the nourishment of which the Bible is appointed? It is to me, as if a conqueror, after cutting up the frame-work of society root and branch, and violating all its holiest ordinances, should com-

fort the bleeding, dying life of the people by babbling of the beauty of the fields and the plenty of the fruits of the earth, from the sight of which their eyes are swimming into the darkness of death. What mean ye, to pretend that ye are reverencing God's word when ye are disesteeming the ordinances which rest upon his word? Oh that ye would, like Josiah when he found the book of the law, begin to order the service of the church and the discipline of the church and the government of the church after a godly sort! But I speak unto the winds and to the surging waves: why learn I not at length to keep silence! I cannot keep silence: the word of God is like a fire in my bones; but, oh, my heart is grieved within me, when I call to mind the vain attempts which I have made to awaken any pity for the ordinances of the church. Speak of the Book with every exaggeration with which a Papist ever spoke of the infallible church; speak of the Bible in whatever terms most blasphemous the ignorant, covetous monks ever spake of the infallible Pope; and your language will be received, your voice blessed, your word applauded, as if it were the word of an angel of God: but speak you any thing of the church, or any ordinance of the church, however gentle, however temperate, however apologetical, and all voices around the table are lifted up against you, until, methinks, it is best to refrain one's speech, and to be even as a dumb man before them. There are

just these two things now in esteem, human beings, and the Bible: but as to any differences amongst human beings in respect of being unbaptized or baptized, in communion with the church or excommunicated, in a holy office or out of it, in a holy place or out of it, such differences are no more. And what, under such circumstances, can you expect, but a broken, disbanded troop, shifting every man for himself the best way he can? So are we broken, and so broken will the enemy find us when he maketh his great attack.

2. Now the root of the evil consisteth in a most insufficient doctrine with respect to the work of redemption, and the work of sanctification which follows thereupon. The work of redemption is necessarily preceded by a state of bondage and captivity in that which is redeemed: and this, again, cannot be natural to the creatures in their original state, but must be an after-state of the creature, for some great end permitted to come to pass. Here, then, have we creation first, a fall into sin and bondage second, and a redemption third, in the progress of the Divine purpose. He, therefore, who would open redemption, must first be able to open the creation and the captivity. Now, the creation is a work without its head, and I may say, without its base—the head and base of it being in due time to be manifested;—and to the end, therefore, of shewing the creature its own emptiness in itself, and engaging it by all its most earnest

desires and instincts to look forward unto, and by faith to rest upon, its coming head and foundation, a fall taketh place. To the end, also, of shewing the creature its own most hateful wickedness and most shocking ingratitude, it is created in such store of health and fruition of good—swathed, as it were, in swaddling-bands of love—that when it should fall into all unbelief, impiety, and usurpation of Godhead, it might well perceive how hateful and worthless a thing it is in itself; and so, by reflection from that dark back-ground, attain unto the apprehension, and somewhat to the comprehension, of that grace which was to be manifested in redemption. To the end, also, of attaining that beginning of the purpose of God—which is the bringing in of his own Son as a visible creature, and demonstrating him to be the Amen, the First and the Last—it is necessary to negative the pretensions of every other creature, by bringing it into the estate of death; that he, having descended into the same, might be known to be the only one having life in himself, by his resurrection from the dead. I am not here purposing to discourse at large upon redemption; but only to shew where such discourse must originate, namely, in the purpose of God; and how it must proceed, namely, through creation and a fall, unto redemption—which, be it observed in passing, is the very logical order of our Shorter Catechism. Now the charge which I deliberately bring against the religious world is,

that the purpose of God is not discoursed of, and in general is not thought good to be discoursed of: and therefore their doctrine beginneth from the Fall, instead of ascending above the Fall. But the Fall is not an origin—creation is before it; and the purpose of God in Christ is before creation, and is the true origin of all being, the true end of all revelation. A theology purely sublapsarian, and which will not consider the higher question, the question of the Fall itself, but take it as an ultimate fact; such a theology will inevitably end in a Pharisaical church. This is a proposition of which I am so assured that I state it over again: a sublapsarian theology must end in a Pharisaical church. And here it is, therefore, that I find the root of the hypocrisy and Pharisaism which is in the church; of which, in my opinion, the religious world is the destined abode: to which, as I think, this apostasy of Protestantism was of old time ordained.

I will do my endeavour to demonstrate this great truth, That a sublapsarian theology must issue in a Pharisaical church. A sublapsarian theology shrinks from considering the Fall as a decree and purpose of God: and for what reason? because they think it makes God the author of sin. So they shift and quibble about a permission, but not a decreeing, of it; as if God's permission were short of a purpose; as if he would permit, what he would rather not have to come to pass. But it is not our present drift to shew

how the great basis of Providence is shaken by this shrinking from predestination: we have undertaken only to shew how a misgiving here, acteth elsewhere, and every where. They cannot think that God should lead his goodly creature Adam into temptation, or break up his finished beauty, and mar his excellent workmanship, for the purpose, for the very purpose, of building him up, through grace, in faith of a Redeemer to come, and by anticipation of the Holy Ghost, into a second temple, of which the glory should be greater than the first. If they shrink from such an acting of the Divine will towards the creature while yet separated from the Head and not inhabited by the Holy Ghost, how much more will they shrink from a like acting of the Divine will upon a creature who is planted into Christ and regenerated by the Holy Ghost? If to them it seemeth shocking to Divine goodness, and beyond the freedom of Divine sovereignty, to bring Adam under the power of sin, how can they believe that God should lead his own elect into all temptation? For they themselves will allow that the grace of God shewn unto the elect is a far higher, closer, and more endearing acting of the Godhead unto man, than creation was. How then, if God might not do the lesser act, of bringing the created one under the yoke of sin, that his grace might abound therein, may he do the greater act, of bringing an elected one under the same yoke, for the

same end? If they shrink from God's acting efficiently unto Adam's fall, they must shrink from God's acting efficiently unto the falls of his elect ones. The physician who dares not meddle with or venture to treat a disease in the extremities, will hardly venture upon the same disease when it hath reached the heart: such physicians are those sublapsarian divines, who will not face the question of God's purpose acting itself out in the fall of Adam: they cannot see God's purpose acting itself out in the manifold falls of his elect creatures. And what, then, are they constrained to believe and do? They are constrained to believe, that when any one hath been by grace brought into the true church of God, he will, so far as God is concerned, go on from grace to grace, from strength to strength, from stature to stature, without a backsliding or a fall. This uninverted, unretrograde, straight-forward path, they will teach to be the way in which God maketh his people to walk. And in so teaching, they will teach a falsehood; for God doth deal otherwise by his people: He doth lead them into temptation, he doth bring them under the power of temptation, all to the end of shewing them the wickedness that is in them, and of purging it out of them. He doth not suffer them to settle on their lees: He bringeth up against them the Philistines, and he giveth the Philistines for a season the mastery over them; in order to grieve them, and to vex them, and to

chastise them very sore; that they may know the abomination that is in the flesh, the thorns that are in their sides, and seek grace and strength to be sufficient for them. This, I say, is the truth. It is a sad and melancholy truth that even the elect should thus need to be dealt withal, but it is nevertheless the truth. It is also a truth most ready to be abused unto licentiousness, and in all ages so abused; but it is not the less, because Satan abuseth it, the precious truth of God.

He who discerneth this—God's dealing with every saved one—can be at no loss to discern his dealing with Adam; and to see in the Fall the first stroke of that destruction of the created thing, that it might become the substance, the new substance, of the redeemed thing: which stroke is continued continually wherever God is labouring to redeem and save. But, by default in the great idea, that creation becometh by its decomposition the nourishment of that life which regeneration is; by default of their not perceiving that the life of every seed springeth and beginneth in a bed of corruption derived from the old pre-existent form; it cometh to pass that they cannot handle, these sublapsarians cannot handle, the matter of the flesh and of the Spirit, of the old man and of the new man; nor expound the progression by retrogression, the holding forward in the midst of many back-casts, the perseverance in the midst of many defeats, whereby the Divine life doth verily, verily proceed. And upon what me-

thod of teaching the church are such neophytes driven, but either upon the Pharisaical or Methodistical method, instead of the Calvinistical? which abhorring, as most hideous to God and man, they say unto the people, and have got the people to believe, that they must ever be getting forward, without falling backward; ever growing more holy, without seeing more of their wickedness, or having it found upon them: that they must be treated as deceivers, if they should shew any symptoms of decay, any misgivings of the spirit, any outbreakings of the natural man; and so forth. And what is the result?—damnable hypocrisy, in order to disguise and hide from one another those wrangling poisonous sins, which the helping hand of another should assist us in tearing away; even as the royal queen did suck the poison from our noble Edward's arm. And there is charity of member to member; there is discipline and government, to help and establish the weak and single-handed brethren against the arts of Satan. But if, instead of regarding these nauseous attacks as the symptoms of conception, and comforting and helping in the midst of them; and instead of watching with care until the birth of the spiritual child, which is not until the weeds of mortality have fallen from around us—and therefore this is not the beginning, but the abiding, care of the church over the life of the Holy Spirit quickened in her members—if, instead of this most pitiful and

most maternal care, the church shall count it evil in her members to be thus affected; and shall treat with evil surmise, and perhaps with casting out, and surely treat as unholy, this most natural, most necessary progress of the spiritual creature; what, what shall come to pass, but a great fatal error concerning the work of God, in the heart of the believer and in the communion of the church? and, instead of the heart-searchings, and heart-writhings, and heart-pangs, there will come about a fair and decent form—an outward beauty, perhaps—but no fruitfulness, no child-bearing, no end of the church. I know this to be the case, I see it to be the case in the religious world. They have arrayed unto themselves a certain outward activity of well-doing, a certain bounded and limited faith, a certain fixed and ruled experience, within which it is not difficult for nature to go her rounds: and, so, her pleasant round she taketh of religious observances; and, being done, she foldeth her hands, and saith, What a good we are doing! They are deceived, they are self-deceived. The work of the Spirit, concerning which they speak so much, is not understood. And how can it, when they understand not the person of Christ, and will shrink from receiving the truth that he took upon him our fallen, sinful nature, and presented it holy and spotless unto God?—But this is another view of the same short-coming in respect of doctrine, to which we must address our-

selves with some diligence; for it is a great ground of the Pharisaism which existeth: and I may say that Pharisaism hath brought this heresy, that Christ took our unfallen nature, to be entertained in these once-enlightened churches—or, I should rather say, in that mystery of iniquity the Religious World, which is forming itself in the churches.

3. He that shrinketh from receiving the truth, that the Most Holy One abode in a tabernacle of flesh, or humanity, such as is this of mine; and, instead thereof, shuffleth away into the vain fancy and fiction that he took upon him such a nature as Adam possessed before he fell; doth not only oppose the declarations of Scripture, that he took upon him the seed of Abraham, and was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, but doth cast out of our sympathies, and disperse far and wide into the region of indistinctness, that life of the Lord Jesus Christ, which, in every act, word, and suffering of it, was ordained unto our ensample and imitation. And if they will believe that our Lord took up the creature in a state unfallen, and therein inhabited, without descending in any way whatever into the fallen flesh; what, after this, is the meaning of the word Redemption? Incarnation and Redemption become separated by all the width which is between unfallen and fallen: for if as Incarnate you say he apprehended the unfallen, how then as Redeemer doth he apprehend the fallen? To those, indeed,

who resolve all divinity into a debtor and creditor account, and consider God's mystery to be included and manifested, yea, and wholly exhausted, in the expression that he cleared off our debt, there is no difficulty in this or in any point; for, if the debt is paid, what matter to them whether in the manhood unfallen, or the manhood fallen, or in the angelic nature, or in any other nature? the debt is paid and we are clear. Such beggarly theology, such Stock-Exchange divinity, finds all higher or deeper thoughts to be but matters of moonshine, compared with this solid question concerning the state of our account with God. And truly and verily, to such pure ignorance hath the religious world arrived, that questions on which hang the issues from death are no longer questions for them. But to one who desireth to apprehend the mystery of redemption as it is in all Scriptures, and not in one or two solitary texts, set forth, it will afford no satisfaction to be told that the Son of God, when he came to redeem the fallen substance of creation, did not work in and upon that substance, but wrought in and by and upon a substance which had never fallen. How leap you this chasm? how make you the doings here to touch the doings there? By imputation, say they. If by imputation from us to him, they mean that it passed over to him without his becoming truly such as we are in flesh and blood, I will not be prevented by my reverence of that word from declaring, that

I abhor such an abuse of it. But if by imputation is meant, that He who was holy did come into our unholy quarters, and, therein abiding for a time, receive the utmost rigours of the law and curse of God—not for any sin of his own, but because he of free will came and partook with the brethren their burden of flesh and blood; and in bearing it, and in redeeming it, and in bringing it out so as to manifest the glory of God, he did take away the sin, disgrace, darkness, and alienation which was upon us, and restore us to the favour and love of God, and bring in the reign of grace and the rejoicing of hope; which work, done in him and by him, is imputed unto us who believe therein for righteousness;—then I declare, that such justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ is all which I have to believe upon for the present, though I hope hereafter to be endued with an inherent righteousness, but still derived from Christ. Creation was the acting of Christ to bring into being that substance besides God which was intended to manifest God in the form of a creature unto the creatures. The fall of the creature was the demonstration of the insufficiency of that outward substance to subsist contentedly in itself. Redemption is the action of the Son, in the creature form of that fallen substance, to gather up again out of it whatever it pleaseth the Father to give him. And this he doth, in the first instance, by taking to himself a body of it, and, through the co-ope-

ration of the other Divine Persons, bearing that body through, and bringing it out triumphant and glorious. A part being thus regenerated, another part may be regenerated, and another, and all, if so it pleased the Father, by that power of the grace of the Godhead which redeemed the body of Christ. Here I have a basis of redemption as broad as creation; even an acting of the Godhead together unto the attaining of their first purpose, to bring in the Son as the manifestation of Their Own co-essential Being, and the first-born of the creatures from the grave. And I have, moreover, the very counterpart of God's proceeding in the Fall; where, when the substance of humanity fell in Adam, it fell in all who of Adam are descended: so, when the fallen substance was redeemed in Christ, it was redeemed in all whom the Father, by regeneration of the Holy Ghost, might be pleased to give unto Christ. And thus Christ becometh partaker with the children of flesh and blood, that the children may be partakers with him of flesh and blood regenerate.

Now, to my utter amazement, and I believe the utter amazement of every theologian, we have found the Religious World rejecting with Puritanical disgust the idea that Christ should have come in our fallen nature; and, as if it involved no more consequences than the mere utterance, they flatly assert that he came in our unfallen nature. To which I reply, You are so

destitute of all theological knowledge and discernment, that it is vain to think of convincing you, against your likings and interests; but I will shew you where this your folly and error originates, and whither it will lead. It originates in Puritanism, as distinguished from purity, or holiness; and it will lead to that form of the Pharisee which saith, "Stand off, I am holier than thou." It shocks you even to hear that Christ came into a fleshly tabernacle such as your own, though we be at all pains to shew you that it was only the more glorious demonstration of his love and of his power and of his holiness:—of his love, in uniting himself to a thing so unlovely; of his power and holiness, in preserving himself blameless and harmless, and separate from sin, in a tabernacle so pervious and patent to all sinful attempts and associations; of his power, in withstanding, upbearing, and upbrining to the throne of God, that creature, that state of creation, which had proved itself so infirm, so rebellious, so dead, so sunk unto the very pit. It makes no matter to you how much the glory of God was illustrated herein; how much the continuity of his purpose was preserved, and the ends of creation maintained; you cannot bring yourselves to think of it, it is so shocking. Well then, if the holiness of God be to your thought so offended, by coming into such unhallowed abodes, and being conscious, though not consenting, unto such wickednesses as human nature is instinct withal, I tell

you, you are a set of sentimental Puritans, who will feel your own holiness to be in like manner blemished by having sympathy, conversation, intercourse, or dealings with publicans and sinners. For, if Christ might not, how may Christ's members? If God may not act efficiently unto the fallen, but must at that chasm let go the creature into the gulf; and if Christ may not follow the creature down the precipice, but must likewise stop short at the fall; what is the conclusion, but that it is a thing past Divine power, and unto Divine holiness repugnant, to descend into the gulf, and labour amongst the wretches there? Are they to be fished out by magic? is a word to bring them up? What a system! And what a fell conclusion for the redeemed church, who, as they grow into the likeness of God and of Christ, must desire to feel, must feel that they ought to feel, the same abhorrence of going down into the weltering abyss of the fallen creatures! Holiness becomes distance; love keepeth asunder; goodness avoideth its object; and the church—which is cast into the world to bear and to endure all reproaches and ignominies with meekness, as did the Lord; to encounter all wickednesses with grace, as did the Lord; to help all wretchedness and misery with redemption, as did the Lord; and without sullyng herself by her condescension and diligence, but rather sanctifying herself the more—this church, which is set to shoulder and contend with wickedness on every side, is, by

such a doctrine concerning what the Lord did, or rather concerning the manner of his doing it, removed away into a sanctimonious distance, from which all her sympathies and all her actions proceed, as from an elevation and mount of holiness. If there be a difference and a distance and a natural antipathy between the humanity of Christ and the humanity of fallen men, the like difference, distance, and antipathy will there be between the members of Christ, as they grow into his likeness, and the humanity of other men. And if it shock you to think, or to be told, that the eternal Son of God came into such a substance as we are all made of, to do for it effectual acts of redemption and sanctification; then, I say, it will in like manner shock you to think, or to be told, that the Holy Spirit in you hath as sinful a substance to contend with as is that of the thief and of the murderer and the adulterer; and that every child of the Spirit is acted in by God unto holiness for the very end of teaching him, that the same Spirit which hath cleansed his leprosy can cleanse the leprosy of the foulest wretch who crawls in misery upon the earth. But *we* obey that Spirit, and go into the wicked heart of the wickedest men; and have pity on them, as bound of Satan; and come into true sympathy with them; and tell them that we are as bad, or worse, than they. Thus, I say, ply into the sinuosities and intricacies of the wicked heart surely

you will not, while you believe that the Lord did not. If you think it sin in the holy God to have done so, it cannot be his purpose that you should so sin; and therefore it must come to pass, yea, and is already come to pass, that the feeling of this religious world should be, Stand off, I am holier than thou. God forbid that I should offend the least of his little ones! but I must fulfil my office as an instructor; and this I do perceive, that the plague is already begun, and that there is no man to put on incense between the living and the dying. This is the true ground of their separation into a society of their own, instead of standing in their places, and shedding grace, mercy, and peace around their holy persons, because these, your families and your friends, are not holy enough. Holy enough! in the name of God I solemnly adjure you to tell me what region of the earth, what region of the fallen creation, was holy enough for the habitation of the Lord Jesus Christ. But, say your novices, he found an unfallen body to dwell in: he came into the fallen world, it is true; but, lest he should touch its pollution, he put around him a mantle of unfallen creation. Then I say, He was not man, nor the Virgin's son; for the virgin and all mankind have fallen. This also is the reason that you have got up a system of religious works distinct and separate from that church in which you are planted, that state of which you are members, and those

eternal ordinances of man, woman, and child, master and servant, king and subject, neighbour and neighbour, which, if you over-leap, God will not ; if you postpone to aught besides, God will not. Ye will say, They are not postponed. Yes, ye pastors will scour the country for gain, and say your office is not postponed : ye wives will leave your children and your servants, to gape after novelties and meddle with affairs of management which become you not, and say, your motherly office is not postponed : you laity will set on foot committees, haply under some woman patron, and controul the goings to and fro, the sayings and the doings of ordained ministers, and say, your office of subjection is not postponed : and ordained ministers will submit to it, and say, that their office of rule is not postponed : and so forth, and so forth—for it is endless ;—and all this, I say, cometh of your discontentment with the ordained works in which your fathers laboured, that you may take up something more holy, and please yourselves with vain exultings over them. Oh, it is a masterly work of Satan : in no other way could he have brought us low. There was a perfection in our institutions, so many bulwarks flank our Zion around, that there was no other way of overcoming us but by inward treachery ; and this, not the treachery of malice—for that we would have resisted—but the treachery of ignorance and indifference to that which we forego, in

the puritan zeal of attaining what our fathers possessed not. As if the people of a well fortified city, and which had resisted many sieges and assaults, should be prevailed upon, by presumption and folly acting on security, to go forth and build themselves another city, upon a site which was believed and applauded as impregnable; never dreaming the while, that while their vain speculation was proceeding, while they were demolishing their strong towers to build up their tower of Babel, the enemy would be upon them, and teach them, too late, their presumption, folly, and rashness. But, God's will be done: it is not mine to prophesy evil, save for the end of preventing it: and I do therefore resume again my discourse of the insufficient doctrine which is drawing on this ossification upon the heart of the church, turning her into a puritan Pharisee, from being the holy and tender spouse of Christ.

4. The next point of short-coming I regard to be in the doctrine of God's sovereignty, as concerneth all things in nature and in grace appertaining to the individual, to the church, or to the world. I mean, the absolute sovereignty of God as Creator, and the absolute dependence upon him of his creatures. Through the exclusive preaching of the grace of God that is in Jesus Christ manifested, and the very infrequent reference to the Father and the Holy Ghost in their personal actings and offices, it prevaieth amongst the Religious World to regard

nothing else than the Saviour and the sinner; and the previous question of the Person sending and his end in sending the Saviour, and the Saviour's subordination inasmuch as he is sent, and the Father's exaltation of him unto the glory which he had before the world was, and the Father's bringing of him into the kingdom to rule with all his enemies under his feet, and whatever else manifesteth a Sovereign God in and through all the departments of the purpose, is forgotten, or prevented from its overruling influence, in the preaching and in the believing of the Gospel. The Gospel borne by Jesus of Nazareth is cut out, like a niche of the temple of God's wisdom, and held up as the whole. Whereof the evil consequence is, that men are not over-awed out of their own self-will, or brought into the condition of obedience; but abide in a liberty to accept or not to accept the grace; and, having accepted it, to go that length in the observance of it which they deem most expedient. What would be the effect of your going to a self-willed man with continual acts of grace and entreaty? what, but to feed his self-willedness? But if you went to him with the authority and right of a stronger will, both resolved and able to bend and break his stubbornness; which having accomplished, you did then treat him graciously; this were likely to be productive of good. Yet, lest the evil propensity might rise again, it would be necessary at all times so to

minge authority with grace as might repress the evil and foster the good. Now, exactly in like manner I do perceive that God, in sending grace by Jesus Christ, hath not the less defended it from the abuse of selfish man, by exhibiting it as the grace of a Sovereign unto those who were under the ban of law and the sentence of death. The very name Grace, which is not merely gift, but gift to the undeserving; the very name Salvation, which is deliverance from perdition; the very name Election, which is choice out of many that are not chosen; every thing doth bear upon the face of it the stamp of sovereignty in the grace. Now, forasmuch as the same person cannot at one and the same time be both a servant and a sovereign; and Christ, the Second Person, hath taken upon himself the character of the servant—a servant though a Son—the sovereignty passeth over to, and properly standeth in, the person of the Father: who becomes the sender, by reason of the Son's being willing to be sent; who becomes the giver, by reason of the Son's being willing to be given. And the Son doth not testify of himself, but of the Father which sent him; giving the honour of applying the benefits of redemption unto the same Father to whom he giveth the honour of devising the purpose and furnishing the means and Mediator. This is Christ's own method of presenting his own work unto sinful men, and in doing likewise we shall do well. The infinite God, the Almighty Creator,

will thus ever be kept before the creature—as to the creature is most needful—with a Mediator between us laying his hand upon both; receiving from the infinite and invisible God, life, and the means of life, unto the creature; and handing up from the creature acknowledgment and service unto the invisible and incomprehensible Godhead. If this origin in the invisible and incomprehensible Godhead be not given to every thing we receive, and if this ending in the invisible and incomprehensible Godhead be not given to every thing we render, then, I say, without a hesitation, that the Father is so far forth avoided, and the visible and comprehensible in the Son absorbeth the Godhead; and we are found worshipping the Man-God as the ultimate, instead of worshipping the invisible Godhead of the Father, Son, and Spirit; standing under the person of the Father as the ultimate, and the bodily fulness of the same Godhead standing under the person of the Son as the Mediator. This, now, is the state to which the church generally is brought, of looking unto the manifest and comprehensible Godhead as the ultimate: and so cometh it to pass, that all prostration of the creature before the Creator, all dependence of the finite upon the Infinite, and reverence of the non-absolute for the Absolute, and subjection of the visible to the Invisible, which constitute religion and law, and, I may say, every other noble occupation of the creature's faculty—all this is de-

stroyed ; and, in its stead, a set of expedients to compass a visible good, a set of instruments whose working can be calculated, a set of schemes resting upon time, place, and circumstance, have gotten the favour and the zeal, and will be the ruin and destruction of the religious world. I know how these remarks will be treated, as mysticism, or madness ; but, being patient of this controversy, as one who sees that all is to be saved, or all to be lost, I will point out, in a more plain and detailed way, how this omission of the sovereignty of God as the ultimate end and first origin of every thing, hath wrought evil in the church.

And, first, it hath marred the beauty of the Divine purpose ; which is this, That the Son, having thus consented to humble himself into a servant for the declaration of the Father's grace and the Father's glory, the Father doth straight-way shew forth his love unto and honour of his Son, by governing all the creatures in such a way as to bring honour to his Son : and this he doth by the Holy Spirit ; calling out of the Gentiles a people for the testimony of his name, during those long ages in which Jacob was not gathered ; and blessing or cursing the nations and kingdoms of the world, according as they did well entreat or evil entreat these the faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ : all downfalls and uprisings of kingdoms, all revolutions of states, overruling for the glory of Jesus Christ ; all martyrdoms, persecutions, and sufferings in

the church permitting, for the end of making his name glorious over the cruelties of power and the pains of death: blessing also with riches and power, and inward peace and outward victory, every state which giveth good welcome, and still more every state which yieldeth obedience, unto the name of his holy child Jesus: and still more wonderfully, though less remarkably, proving the Divine honour of that name, by enabling every one who believeth in it to triumph over Satan in his flesh, and to produce the holy fruits of the Spirit. All providence, whether particular or general, whether over the church or over the world, whether over the individual members or over the body of Christ, hath this, and this only, for its object, to give glory unto the Son. The Father is bringing all creatures under his feet; his friends gathering into a noble company of the redeemed; his enemies casting down into the pit; restraining the rage of those who live, and making their wrath to praise him; until the time shall come for gathering unto him the tribes of Jacob, who shall come with willing might, at the ensign of God lifted up upon the mountains, to maintain the cause of Him whom they crucified, against the anticristian confederacy of the nations: whom then God shall break in pieces like a potsherd—or rather the Son himself; for now the government shall begin to be upon his shoulders, and then he shall rule the earth in righteousness, and the

people with equity. This earth, I say, shall be the theatre on which God will exhibit his King: who, when he shall have destroyed death and all his enemies in the lake of fire, shall then give up that kingdom with which the Father had endued him for its reduction unto order and blessedness: he shall give up his own single sovereignty; he shall cease to be the end of the Father's rule and government; and, having attained his eternally purposed place, as Head of the creatures, he shall stand there for ever, God's Vicegerent, God's Priest and King over the visible, to keep all creation, in its various orders, attuned unto the praise and attired unto the glory and begirt unto the service of the invisible and incomprehensible Godhead, standing unrevealed, uncommunicated, and incommunicable, under the person of the Father. Such is the great scheme of Divine providence unto the fulfilment of the Divine purpose in the bringing in of the Son.

Now I aver, that from the Father being so much lost sight of, and the Son presented as if the only substance of Godhead, it hath come to pass, that all knowledge and discourse of Providence, in its great bearings upon nations and confederacies of nations, upon churches, hath been lost and hidden from the information of the people; whereby all history, all politics, all church government, and church experience, have gone astray into the same service of expediency, which is calculable and visible good in oppo-

sition to that infinite and invisible good, which faith apprehendeth and hope rejoiceth over. Now this I regard as an evil of incalculable amount; to have lost the key to providence, and to be left in the dark labyrinths of our own foresight and calculation. But even this I know the men for whom I labour in patient argument will set at nought, as a dream of my own imagination. Wherefore, as one that will not be mistaken by his brethren, to whom he openeth a most concerning matter, I will take new positions to observe from; and haply, by God's blessing, I may succeed in shewing how this forgetfulness of his sovereignty doth work baneful effects in the midst of us.

Whether you regard the creatures in their unregenerate or in their regenerate state, the varieties of their condition, and of their experiences of good and ill, is a subject concerning which no discourse of any kind can be holden, without a full, implicit, and absolute acknowledgment of the sovereignty of God. You can resolve it into nothing else. It is the great standing monument, the ever-living, ever-acting, presence of God's sovereignty. The varieties of the kingdom of grace are just as great as the varieties of the kingdom of creation. Sovereignty is written in the one, no less remarkably than in the other. Murmurs cannot be kept down, envy blotted out, resignation introduced into the diversities of living men, otherwise than by the acknowledgment of God as a Sovereign or-

dering the lot of every man according to his own pleasure. And I believe, for my own part, that the reason why this ungovernable spirit hath arisen in the bosom of the church, is, that the great governing principle of God's sovereignty hath been overshadowed, in the liberty of accepting or of rejecting certain terms of accommodation upon which a certain ancient quarrel between Him and the creatures is to be made up. Of this I am well assured, that till God's sovereignty be both preached out to the uttermost, and received in the love of it, we shall have no government brought back, either unto the state or unto the church. They discourse, and will hear discourse, concerning the wisdom of God's arrangements; but of his right to arrange so they neither skill to discourse nor care to hear discourses. Now, until the right is acknowledged, God will not furnish us with weapons against himself, and against ourselves, by giving us insight into the wisdom and ends he had in view. Who is the moralist, yea, who is the divine, that dare tell it out, That right is right, because God willed it so; good is good, because God willed it so; and being is being, only according to the same good pleasure of his will, "according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will?" And therefore it is that men have no insight into morals, or politics, or laws; what be their principles, what be their ends, and what be the manners of their working. Not

acknowledging the sovereignty of God in his purpose, he involveth them in darkness that may be felt. Talk of the Divine right of the king or magistrate, talk of the Divine right of church government, and they regard you either as a fool or as a traitor against the welfare of mankind. But, forasmuch as God hath made me of another mood than to be scorned and laughed out of the sound convictions to which in the spirit of a sound mind I have been brought, I will not flinch from opening my mind a little upon this very subject of the ordinances both of human society and the state; into which, as I think, God hath given me some insight, because I reverence his sovereign right therein: and this I do, to shew forth a little how right instruction concerning God's sovereignty would go far to remedy those evils in the spirit of society concerning which we have so largely discoursed.

II. This is the second head of our improvement—namely, to shew forth unto the state, or civil polity, some of those great cardinal truths upon which resteth all good government and well-ordered society; and to explain a little wherein the sacredness of civil institutions consisteth. And to this, as to a very great subject for which little room is left, I do entreat the good Spirit of God to lend me his gracious help, and to open the ear of some who are invested with power and authority and dignity,

that I may have a fit audience for such high discourse.

Well believing, then, that all things existent are from the beginning ordained in the purpose of God—both things evil and things good—for the end of bringing to pass the one great purpose, which is, the glorification of his Son in creature form as the Head of all the creatures; and believing, moreover, that man, of all other creatures of God's hand, is, through all his conditions, the most express manifester of God's purpose in the Son of man shut up; we go into the examination of things as they exist—and especially of human society—not as into a confused or accidental mass, but into a system ordained and upheld of God for this very purpose of testifying to his Son, and glorifying his Son. And therein consisteth the great sacredness of human nature and of human well-being, because it is the appointed fore-shewing and sustaining of the purpose of God in Christ. In the midst of all human wickedness, in the midst of all this world's turbulence, every where is it made apparent, that there is in it the working of deep wisdom unto a common end. The laws of human well-being work together to the demonstration of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ: shewing that man, in all his moods, is made in the likeness and after the image of God; and that the world is the outer court unto the church, and likewise, in some sort, the type of the kingdom. Let me point out some

of these, the ordinances of human well-being, the natural helps and defences of man's estate. The first of which is, the ordinance of a family. Look upon a family—father, mother, and children—and ask yourself why it is that immortal souls, of the like substance, and of equal value in the sight of God, should yet be so diversely conditioned ; one brought out as a man, another brought out as a woman, and others brought out as children of these. This is not accidental: it is the law of human existence : and that such a family may well exist, the father and the mother must have a united heart, an undivided affection one to another ; the father using his wisdom and strength, the mother her love and watchful care, towards the very continuance of human beings : and according as this union in subordination is maintained, so is the blessedness and prosperity of the whole. Now, we, who know the purpose of God in Christ, can explain this mystery of the sovereignty of God in bringing immortal beings thus, and not otherwise, into a condition of happy existence. The husband and wife thus united, are the ordinance of God, his living ordinance, wide as the bounds of mankind, for expressing the union between Christ and his church ; his labour and toil for the love of her, her pain and travail in bringing forth children unto him : and in the truth, faithfulness, and oneness of a wife's affection are continually shewn forth what ought to be the affection of the church towards Christ.

The necessity of man and woman unto the ends of God's purpose in creation, shews the necessity of Christ and a church towards his end in redemption. The higher dignity of a wife and a mother over any one of the children, shews the higher dignity, in the purpose of God, of the Lamb's wife, or the elect church, over all the creatures, or families of creatures, which unto God shall be gotten through all eternity. Now, herein consisteth the sacredness of this relation of husband and wife, which no marriage ceremonial can express enough; that it is God's universal type, for teaching the universal lesson that, first, out of all the creatures is a bride to be composed for his Christ; and this is the dignity, of our having a place in the New Jerusalem, of our being seated in the throne and round about the throne. Now, observe that this precious diamond of truth is encased in the most precious affections and dearest enjoyments of human nature: it is also flanked, if I may so speak, with the strongest bulwarks and entrenchments of the Divine Providence: so that it might be both very sacred, and very strong. And herein consisteth the guilt, the unspeakable guilt, of violating a relationship which is constituted of God to tell out a truth so momentous unto the world, unto worlds of worlds. Here now is explained so much of the mystery of a family as concerneth the two heads of it, that, though of one substance, they should be exhibited in such diversity of kind.

Now, again, if I speak of father and child: why are two immortal souls so brought into being as that the one should, as it were, grow out of the substance of the other, be dependent almost for every breath upon his care, be under his responsibility and not its own (as all laws to a certain age regard him; the two forming, in the eye of the law, but one substance, until a third part of human life be overpast)—what is this mystery, but to reveal the mystery of the Father and the Son's one substance, though two persons; and especially the manifestation of that mystery, when the Son, who had been in the bosom of the Father, came forth, and, though a Son, learned obedience and fulfilled his Father's will; was his Father's image, is his Father's heir, and under his invisible Father exerciseth all power and government? Now this, again, is what constitutes the sacredness of a father's right over his son, and the sacredness of a son's obedience to his father. This also constitutes the right of inheritance in the person of the first-born, and many other things connected with the family, which we cannot now particularize. And to protect and preserve the integrity of this relationship, that it may rightly represent the mystery of which it stands the exponent, God hath constructed his scheme of Providence; and doth order it so, that prosperity, and blessedness, and long life, and numerous thriving progeny, should depend upon the right discharge of the parental and

filial duties. Revelation hath revealed this : God's own lips did not hesitate to announce it in these words, " That thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." But its reality does not depend upon its being revealed ; its reality is presupposed in its revelation : it is so revealed because God hath so ordered it. And in all lands this is the ordinance of God's providence, that blessings many and precious should attend upon dutiful and well-ordered households. And the end of God in so providing it is, that by all that is dear to man ; by all in prosperity which is desirable, and by all which in adversity is fearful ; He might induce men to constitute and to preserve the family in such sort as may best represent and shadow forth the great mystery of Christ and his church, of the Father and his children. Just for the same reason that the high priest might not approach the holy place without the sound of the golden bells which hung around his raiment, lest he should die ; so may not the blessing of families be secured, and the curses of families avoided, otherwise than by family love and duty : in both cases because they are types and symbols of the invisible realities of Christ ; and, being so, must be defended by every sanction from declaring untruth. And thus, by means of a fixed and stable providence, constructed so as to hedge men in to natural wisdom and natural well-doing, it cometh to pass, that law, which secureth the good and

preventeth the evil ; philosophy, which teacheth the same ; and poetry, which commendeth it, are all, when strictly looked into, only the interpretation of that providence, which God hath arranged so as to bless that form of life which shall symbolize Christ, and speak harmoniously with the truth which is to be revealed ; while it shall curse every form of life which doth not symbolize Christ, but is in contradiction of the truth to be revealed. And this is the ground of natural religion—to wit, that all things under the Fall, as well as above it, are constituted so as to foreshew the Redeemer and the redemption that was prepared in the purpose of God before creation. Natural religion is not able to know the Godhead of Christ, which is an impossibility ; but, by seeing nature, though out of Christ, to be yet a shadow of him, and so of God in him : this is natural religion ; and revelation is the giving unto us of that substance which every thing was dimly shadowing forth. Now, to return again to the relationship of human souls : this is what constitutes the sacredness of relative duties, that when fulfilled, they speak an eternal truth ; when not fulfilled, they speak a hideous falsehood. A father loving his children, and ruling them in righteousness ; and children honouring their father and their mother, and obeying them in righteousness ; these are obeying and honouring the law of their being ; and if they have no more revealed to them, they are so far forth well pleasing to God, and

I think may by us be well hoped for, even though they know not Christ, because, not knowing him, they have yet been serving him. If the animate and inanimate creation, devoid of reason, shall receive their share in the redemption because they have testified in their irrational way to the coming Redeemer, why much more should not likewise those rational creatures, who have, by well fulfilling the law of their being, and standing fast to the truth of things, have their reward in the same redemption? But, to return.

I believe, in like manner, that the relation between master and servant doth in like manner shadow forth the lordship of Christ over the creatures. For, taking this relationship in its general aspect, and not as it is in those countries where Christianity hath redeemed it; take the master and proprietor of a large household, who have been bought with his money—for example, Abraham—and what have you but a multitude of souls brought into subjection unto one soul, notwithstanding their natural liberty and equality? He hath power over them to life and death; they eat of his bread; their labour is his, their gains are his: all that are born in the house are his. At such a picture infidelity writhes in rage; but not so a wise reflecting man, who hath reverence for the ordinance of God; not so an enlightened Christian, who can study and understand the typical character of all things. Our evangelical Chris-

tians do take as great offence at this as the infidels themselves, but it is their ignorance which I am now seeking to enlighten. I say, then, that such a family and household—in which are vessels to honour and vessels to dishonour, some standing in the favour of their master and some obnoxious to his punishment, elect ones and reprobate ones, some adopted into sonship, some freed men, and some bondsmen under the lash—is the type, the standing type, over all the world, of Christ, the Lord both of the election and the reprobation, having bought them all with the price of his own precious blood, and nourishing them all with his own bountiful providence; yet not hindered by this generosity from making distinctions, and adopting some into the liberty of sons, leaving others under the bondage of slaves. And this, which is the true interpretation of the mystery of Divine Providence in so ordering things, is likewise at once the guide and the comfort of those souls which in such inequality are stationed; teaching one who is a master that there is no iniquity in having many servants, or even slaves, under him, and that it would be altogether an error for him at once to set about emancipating them; that such a feeling is not true benevolence, but insurrectionary wilfulness, the same which makes our Universalists dissatisfied that Christ should have under him both elect and reprobate persons. This was what the infidels of France were guilty of at

the Revolution; and, like every great practical falsehood, it led to ruin and dismay. On the other hand, one who is called to be a slave will be exceedingly comforted by the reflection that he is not thereby dishonoured of God or Christ, but brought into the closer fellowship of Christ's condition, who took upon himself the form of a slave: that he is not precluded thereby from rising into the highest honour with God; but, on the other hand, is in the way to that preferment; seeing Christ, for taking upon himself the form of a servant, and enduring the cross therein, has received a Name above every name. So the soul that is called into the condition of a slave, and put to the torture there, ought to look upon itself as brought most near to Christ, and in the way of the highest exaltation, even as the Apostle Peter teacheth us in his first Epistle. Ah! how, for want of light in these matters, doth society groan, and its wickedness abound! If thus servitude were interpreted, how comforted, how joyful, would servitude be! If thus lordship were interpreted, how careful, how observant, how discriminative, how patriarchal would lordship be! But as things now stand in the church, with ministers—and I speak particularly of Dissenting ministers in this remark—with ministers who, instead of thus interpreting servitude as a great ordinance of God for preaching unto the church subjection unto Christ, do speak of it as a condition precluding or pre-

venting men altogether from being Christians; who, in handling the slave question, do handle it rather as French republicans than as Christian ministers—whom I have heard myself frequently say, how can they be Christians so long as they be slaves?—I say, while this state of profound ignorance and rebellious feeling exists among us, what can we expect, but that such a ministry will work more and more to the dissolution of all the bands of social life, which the Christian religion hath established upon better promises, and not dissolved; that they will hasten the bringing in of that liberal or dissolute spirit, which is now wrestling hard for the sanctuary and the throne?

It is from the same Divine source that the providence of God in respect of kingdoms receiveth its justification, as in respect of families; and it is by looking at the most arbitrary and absolute governments in the light of natural predictions and representations of the future kingdom of Christ, that a wise and holy man obtaineth for himself comfort, in the midst of all the tyranny and oppression which they have inflicted. These stern ordinances of Providence are all brought into subjection unto Christ. As the infirmities and sinfulness of flesh did only prove his righteousness the more triumphantly, as death and corruption did only shew the life and immortality that was in him the more conspicuously, and all other the evil conditions of fallen man did only serve to dis-

play the grace and love of Divinity, and to distinguish the God-man from every other man ; so, say I, that the ordinances of law and government and kingly power, notwithstanding the arbitrariness and injustice with which they have been most frequently administered, do only bring out more clearly the occasion for righteous judgment and lordship, while they are overruled in some sort to shadow forth the very form and feature thereof. I do not here undertake to discourse of the kingdom of David and of Solomon, as it was written by Samuel in a book, and laid up before the Lord—which is the true type and resemblance of that kingdom which Messiah is to constitute over the Jewish people, and, through them, over the whole earth—because this properly belongeth to the head of Revelation, concerning which I do not at present entreat ; but with respect to the universal empires of Babylon, and Persia, and Greece—especially of the first under Nebuchadnezzar, which hath been, as it were, the model of universal empire ever since, and the continual excitement of that up-stirring ambition in the breasts of men—I believe, that, though Satan did reap his harvest from these ambitious undertakings, God did overrule the enemy, and restrain him unto the manifestation of the one kingdom which the one nation under the One King is yet hereafter to hold. And on this account he hath brought that one nation into subjection and cruel bondage under all these

kingdoms, to the end that, while the symbol of universal kingdom was before the eyes of men, the exposition of the symbol, by a witnessing suffering people, might be made unto all men. For it would have been as a vain thing to have merely written in a book, in a dialect belonging to a tribe of the earth, certain prophecies of a golden age, and glorious estate of men and things, about to be upon the earth, unless there had been also a people, separate from generation to generation, to testify to the same by blood and wounds and direful suffering. Nor would this alone have sufficed, unless there had been also a representation of the thing, however rude, kept continually submitted to the observation of the nations unto whom the prophecy was written, and for whom the testimony of suffering was given. I say, there must be these three things, in order to substantiate the great purpose of God to bring in the universal monarchy of his Son by means of the Jewish nation: First, the book in which the same is written, authenticated by all the authority which can be given to a book whereof God is the author: secondly, a continual and abiding model, or representation on the earth, of that same wonderful universal monarchy and judgment of One Man, the head of one nation: and, thirdly, in the midst of the world, unto which the prophecy of its future condition is given and the model thereof held up, there must be a continual testimony of living men

suffering and enduring all things rather than give up that one hope and glorious expectation. The Bible is the book, the Jews are the people, and I say that the succession of universal monarchies is the model. In times like these, whose dissoluteness or liberality this discourse is intended to expose, such language of respect holden concerning absolute government will expose me to all manner of contemptuous and outrageous speeches, as if I were a favourer of that cruelty and oppression which they have wrought. I am a favourer of the idea of single universal monarchy, because it is the idea which holy Scripture holdeth forth as the purpose of God and the blessedness of the earth. I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will yet be the Lord and King of all the earth; and therefore I do favour that idea exceedingly; yet not beyond what is done by the constitution of England, whose sovereign embraceth in himself more of the perfectness and completeness of the type than any other who is or who hath been. But more of this in its place.

To begin, then, in order. I observe, that, let our levellers and liberals say what they please—for wisdom was neither born with them, nor with them will it die—there is no such blessing of Divine Providence as regular government, though it be ever so absolute. Take any firmly established government whatever upon the face of the earth, and compare it with the condition of a savage people. In the one, the

ideas of men have a form and representation ; in the other, they have none. In the one, you have power, and dignity, and elegance, and learning, and justice, and art of every kind, represented by their proper objects ; of all which, in the other case, you have none ; but wild wilfulness, savage brutality, nakedness, and desolation. Take, upon the one hand, the noblest race of savages upon the face of the earth, the tribes of North America ; and upon the other, the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar, in all its golden state and tyrannical power : bring these into comparison with one another, and say, which is the nobler and better condition of mankind ; and which is the state of human existence best adapted for receiving and entertaining the ideas of God, of religion, and of immortality. In the one, the mind is a waste entirely, or conversant only with a few extremities of suffering and joy : in the other, all the resources of nature are exhausted, all the faculties of the mind of man displayed, all varieties of good and evil pursued and avoided — in one word, man is educated, the alphabet of existence is taught him, and he is familiar with duties and with responsibilities ; lifted up above immediate wants ; the subject of laws, the object of rule and government ; his passions let and hindered ; his interests prevented from injuring another's ; and, in one word, his distinction from and exaltation above the passions and senses, which we have in common with brutes,

is brought out and established. But I discourse not now in general against our levellers and liberals, but in particular to expound the mystery of single and universal monarchy. Take the king of Babylon in his palace; surround him with all the emblems of reverence; approached by his own queen on bended knee, and stretching out to her the end of his golden sceptre to re-assure her fainting soul. See him taking his rest, while three gallant and wise and valiant peers watch around his head, propounding to one another grave questions, and wittily resolving high claims. Behold him: his will the rule of the world. See his governors from the distant provinces rendering unto him the returns of just and equitable government. See his posts riding on swift dromedaries, to carry his decrees through an hundred kingdoms. Yea, even pass over unto his sacrilegious act of commanding the golden image which he had set up to be worshipped, and requiring that no petition nor request should be preferred unto any god, but to himself alone. See him walking in his garden, and looking over Babylon the great, and saying, in the pride of his heart, "Is not this great Babylon which I have builded?" I say, study upon this model, and you shall better attain unto a conception of that great idea which God hath given us of his Son's future earthly dignity, than by any other way that I know of. It is true, that Satan wrought his own guile with it all; and yet I must say,

that God seems to me to have wrested Nebuchadnezzar out of his hand. Yet not the less do I hold that God always overruled Satan's cunning, and ordained these absolute kingdoms, which form such a feature in the world's history, to the very end of forth-shadowing the kingdom of his Son: insomuch, that, if I had my choice of a theme from which to discourse thereof, I would choose Nebuchadnezzar and his acts before every other, saving and excepting his holiness the Pope—concerning whom I have now to discourse a little, before opening the mystery of the Protestant kings; in whom, as seemeth to me, the complete type is given, and which is now about to be broken for ever. Fit time, methinks, before such great desecration, to open it unto the people, and justify God against the plotters and enemies within the realm.

The Popedom, if it had not been a usurpation, would have been the fullest and fairest model of the kingdom of Christ which hath been ever exhibited; having in it the absoluteness of power, combined with the holiness of priesthood; being the very form of our Melchizedek, a Priest upon his Throne: who, without armies and without expenses, by nuncios and legates merely, did accomplish the same ends which the absolute kings did accomplish by force: who did establish himself upon the earth, not only as the object of dread, but likewise as the object of reverence; bringing under his

dominion the emperor who represented the last and most enlarged of the autocratic dominations; and not only so, but he did make himself to be revered by all the people, insomuch that his pontifical word could dissolve allegiance and abolish natural ties. He even attained unto the claim of absolving from all guilt, of dispensing from all obligation; and his word canonized saints, dispensed righteousness, changed laws and time, and otherwise usurped the office of Christ, the Ruler of the earth and the Dispenser of the Divine will. And into his city flowed the riches of the Gentiles, and up to his city went the most holy of the people. Yet he himself removed not thence, neither shewed himself openly, save at the high solemnity, when the assembled myriads knelt before him, and he bestowed upon them his blessing, as the blessing of God. Time would fail me to explain, point by point, this full-length portraiture of our true Melchizedek; which, had it been an idea written in a book, and held up unto the church as the great object of its hope, would have been the greatest, the noblest, the best performance of piety and wisdom; but, being a reality embodied unto sense, a pageant contrived by the devil and informed by a man, is the fiend's arch-mock, the master-piece of delusion, the consummation of idolatry, the most daring attempt of men and devils to parody the purpose of God, and destroy the expectation and desire of the whole earth. If idolatry before the

coming of Christ was the great object of Divine hatred and prevention because it attempted to inculcate the great secret before the time, by giving form unto God before he had taken form in the seed of the woman, and so anticipating the glory set apart for his Son, as the *Eikon*, or statue, of the invisible God; so, after Christ, the image of the invisible God, had been manifested in humility, together with a promise of bringing him in the second time in glory, then it became the great act of sacrilege to attempt, by any device, to forestal, or upon any person to fix, that glory which God hath reserved for his Son: whereof, indeed, every baptized man is constituted a witness, having the Holy Ghost given unto him, as his earnest that he himself shall in the like glory appear: but if, instead of witnessing that the Priest-King, the Infallible, the Absolute, is not yet in the world; we do give that honour to a man like unto ourselves, who is in the world, or oppose him not unto the death who claimeth it; then, I say, are we guilty of a tenfold sacrilege and a tenfold idolatry, and are servants of Satan far beyond the most gross, crude, and cruel image-worshippers on the earth. There is no language, there are no similitudes, for expressing the abhorrence of an enlightened and pious Christian towards the Papacy; and there is no such sign of lukewarmness in the Christian church, as to have become so tolerant and so fair spoken towards that abomination. Never-

theless, while I thus speak; like the Fall, and the natural world under the Fall, and the constitution of universal absolute kingdoms, there is nothing so worthy the study of a wise and patient man, as that master-piece of Satan's invention the Papacy; through which he hath inflicted such a blow upon Christendom, as that all the disciples of the Lord, saving a handful of stragglers here and there, have entirely forgotten the Melchizedek kingdom of Christ which is to come. I will say it over again, for the use of Protestants, and especially for the sister churches of Scotland and England, that the Papacy, as it formed itself in the times of Jerome and Augustine, and from an earlier time, did gradually abolish the primitive hope of the church concerning Christ's coming and kingdom; which hope hath never yet dawned again upon the spiritual heavens, though oft and oft it hath struggled in the midst of the clouds and darkness and mists of hell which that superstition brought over the face of heaven. We have had such a bout to maintain and keep the single point of justification by faith, that we have never got to the subject of our hopes at all. Oh, this Protestantism is become a beggarly thing! a poor, beggarly system of expediency! Verily, it is like the last tatter of a beggar's outward garment, hanging shivering in the wind, without comfort and without shelter. It took too low an aim when it merely set itself to contradict the Pope: it should

have studied him, it should have profited by him, it should have interpreted the wisdom of Satan and turned it against himself: then, instead of merely denying purgatory of the soul, Protestantism would have gone into the whole question of a Christian's hope, as they went into the whole question of a Christian's faith; and then the primitive doctrine of the advent and kingdom of Christ would have come out in its fulness and its beauty. No religion can be founded upon negatives: the Protestant religion necessarily took up a negative, and it should have been more guarded against the peril which arose out of this singular prerogative.—But, to return. The thing which I am to teach concerning the Papacy is, that such a vast structure of Providence was not ordained without great purposes of wisdom; of which the principal, as I conceive, was, to give types and forms and figures for the right conceiving of that spiritual kingdom which is to be established under Christ. I say that this is the principal end of it for this reason, that to defeat, and dislodge from the church, the hope of Christ's advent and kingdom, was the purpose of Satan in the Papacy—in which, alas! how admirably hath he succeeded! Now, I know that Satan is always outwitted by God; that the thing he works at always works out his own defeat; and therefore my counsel, though late, unto those who have faith in Christ's advent and kingdom, is, that they

should work the mine of the Papacy with more patience and good temper than did Luther and the Reformers, and they will bring out of it a more wonderful treasure than the Reformation did. With this remark I do now proceed to open a little the mystery of the Protestant kingdom, as it is established in the midst of us ; concerning which, if I had been writing some few months ago, I would have spoken in the language of the Prophet Ezekiel (xxviii.), "The workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth. Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God. Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty."

First of all, the constitution of our kingdom is intolerant of the Papacy, and doth not endure communion with it in any form whatever. From the time of the Conqueror until the Reformation, there was one struggle after another against that hideous usurpation ; which ended in the most complete and entire protestation against it, as an abomination with which no terms should be kept. It is the only polity or state in the world with which the ministers of our king dare not have a correspondence, from which they dare not receive an accredited messenger or a written message. Every counsellor of the king, every member of his parliament, every judge and magistrate and sheriff, and officer in the army and navy, and

every magistrate of any corporation within the kingdom, till lately, was required to make attestation of his Christian faith by that act of taking the sacrament in the Protestant form; which, while it is Christ's own test of discipleship, is, by a wonderful providence, at the same time the only act unto which a Papist may not for Jesuitical purposes conform. Either by this, or by express oaths of abjuration, was every member of this Christian kingdom, from the least even unto the greatest, required to renounce, abjure, detest, and abominate, that which God abominates. This negation, to begin with, was a noble thing: it was an unspeakable service unto the truth. The nation which did so gallantly and fearlessly cast down the gauntlet for the living God, must needs possess his favour; and in that nation his wisdom and his might would be set to make it beautiful and glorious.

The next thing which I observe in the constitution of this kingdom, worthy of all admiration, is the place given unto the church; which is the very place that it ought to occupy,—established by the king, endowed with all needful support, and with all proper accommodations for the worship of God; but not interrupted or interfered with: yet overlooked in the administration of its government and the exercise of its discipline. It ought to be overlooked: for this reason, that the power which established it hath always to be acknowledged as maintaining it in these its high immunities,

as observing whether it be fulfilling its offices to the kingdom; thereby teaching the church that it is established by the grace of the king upon a solemn covenant, unto which it is always bound to conform itself. The king is thus ever acknowledged to be the responsible person for the kingdom and all the lieges thereof. The church he taketh unto himself, in high allegiance unto Christ, and maketh her the nursing mother of his people. He acknowledgeth Christ as his head: and because Christ is head of the church, and worketh all things for the good of his church, so the king, acting under Christ, taketh order for the well-being of his church, and for the withstanding of all opposition thereto, and for the uprooting of all heresies therein. The Church of England hath for this named him head of the church. The Church of Scotland hath refused to him this title, upon the ground that he is but vicegerent for Christ in respect of lordship in general, and may not take unto himself the name of Christ, as head of the election: but, so far from abating his duties towards the church, methinks the Church of Scotland hath gone even greater lengths than the Church of England in this respect; as witness these extracts from her symbolical books: "We further confess and acknowledge, that such persons as are placed in authority are to be loved, honoured, feared, and holden in most reverent estimation, because they are the lieutenants of God, in whose sessions God himself

doth sit and judge, yea, even the judges and princes themselves, to whom by God is given the sword, to the praise and defence of good men, and to revenge and punish all open malefactors. Moreover, to kings, princes, rulers, and magistrates, we affirm, that chiefly and most principally the conservation and purgation of religion appertain: so that not only they are appointed for civil policy, but also for the maintenance of the true religion, and for suppressing of idolatry and superstition whatsoever." (Scottish Confession, Art. xxiv.)—"The magistrate neither ought to preach, minister the sacraments, nor execute the censures of the kirk, nor yet prescribe how it should be done, but command the ministers to observe the rule commanded in the word, and punish the transgressors by civil means. The ministers exercise not the civil jurisdiction, but teach the magistrates how it should be exercised, according to the word."...."The civil power should command the spiritual to exercise and to do their office, according to the word of God. The spiritual rulers should require the Christian magistrate to minister justice and punish vice, and to maintain the liberty and quietness of the kirk within their bounds." (Second Book of Discipline, chap. i.)—"Although all the members of the kirk be holden, every one in their vocation, and according thereto, to advance the kingdom of Jesus Christ so far as lieth in their power, yet chiefly Christian princes and other magis-

trates are holden to do the same : for they are called in the Scripture nourishers of the kirk, forsomuch as by them it is, or at least ought to be, maintained, fostered, upholden, and defended against all that would procure the hurt thereof."

.... "To make laws and constitutions agreeable to God's word, for advancement of the kirk and policy thereof; without usurping any thing that pertains not to the civil sword, but belongs to the offices that are merely ecclesiastical, as is the ministry of the word and sacraments, using ecclesiastical discipline, and the spiritual execution thereof, or any part of the power of the spiritual things which our Master gave to the Apostles, and to their true successors." (As above, chap. x.)—"The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven; yet he hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the church; that the truth of God be kept pure and entire; that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship or discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly stated, administered, and observed. For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted be according to the mind of God." (Westminster Confession of Faith, chap. xxiii.)—These quotations serve to shew how much at one are the two

churches established in this kingdom, concerning the important relation of the church and state. And though they differed in the scale of worldly appearance in which they set forth the offices of the church, yet in respect to the number and relative bearings of these offices they differed not so very widely as is generally thought; a Scottish minister having secured to himself the dignity of a bishop with as much jealous care as an English Prelate; and a Scottish elder and deacon having, except in the liberty of preaching, parallel jurisdictions within the little diocese of a Scottish parish to those which a priest and deacon have within the larger diocese of an English bishoprick. In doctrine, also, the two churches harmonize with more exactness than any two other reformed churches whatsoever. In worship and in government, though the modes be different, there is the same endeavour to preserve the unity of the church, the equity of its discipline, the prevention of schism, the avoidance of secular interference, and the censorship of the clergy, which are things essential to be sought after and procured in the administration of the church. I speak, be it observed, of the Church of England before the virtual abolition of her two courts of convocation; for since that time her administration of government hath grown to be altogether out of joint.

Now, so far from grieving that there have been established, in the two parts of this island, two forms of ecclesiastical polity, the one aiming at

the simplicity of the primitive church, the other affecting more of the pomp and state of the Latin church, I can discern in this constitution of things a great means of preserving the kingdom so long upon a true foundation. For, though I may not quarrel with King Edward the Sixth because of his Royal interference in ecclesiastical affairs, for that it is thus written, in the Second Book of Discipline, "Kings and princes that be godly, may sometimes by their own authority, when the kirk is corrupted, and all things out of order, place ministers, and restore the true service of the Lord; after the example of some godly kings of Judah, and divers godly emperors and kings also in the light of the New Testament;" yet do I well to blame exceedingly the First James, and the First Charles, and afterwards the Second Charles and the Second James, for their cruel and unholy usurpations upon and invasions of a church walking in the grace of God, and the love and fellowship of the churches of God; for it is written in the same place, "Yet, when the ministry of the kirk is once lawfully constituted, and they that are placed do their office faithfully, all godly princes and magistrates ought to hear and obey their voice, and reverence the majesty of the Son of God speaking through them." Now, the Church of England, during these four reigns, grievously forgot her allegiance unto Christ, and her duty unto the king, whom she should have warned, and not encouraged to

take upon himself the power of the keys; which is to constitute in one person the offices of king and priest, never to be united till Christ come; to constitute the great Melchizedek usurpation. From this the obsequiousness of our sister church, the faithfulness of the Kirk of Scotland, which she trod under her feet, did save the land. We contended and wrestled as a church: we suffered no schism, we favoured no dissent; but simply stood upon our foundations, and contended for the faith once delivered to the saints. Arminianism had deluged the Church of England; an infinity of sects was tearing the vitals of the realm of England; but Scotland stood as one man, striving in the swellings of Jordan to preserve the ark of the living God. And after she had suffered awhile; after she had yielded up many martyrs for Christ's royal office in his house; after the blood of her holy people, goaded to distraction, had dyed the heath of her moors and mountains; after every rocky cave, and dungeon-keep, and inhospitable foreign shore, had been sanctified with the praise and prayer and great searchings of heart for the sorrows and sufferings of Christ's Kirk of Scotland; it pleased God to bring us a king from a foreign land, and give us princes after his own heart. O England! thou little wittest how much of thy bloodless Revolution, and thy good race of kings since that time, was due to the patience, and sufferings, and martyrdoms of the Kirk of Scotland,

which thou trodest under foot. For she alone, of all the Christian communities within the island, was alive to the sacrilege of the Stuart kings; whose tyranny and papistry thou discernedst, but thou perceivedst not how they trod in the sanctuary; and no blood of thy sons was shed in vindication of God's holy place. That testimony arose from the children of the people of my land; and in answer to their witness, I believe it was, that William of Orange became thy king. And who attempted to disturb the Hanoverian succession? was it not the descendants of those Episcopalians and Papists whom England sought to set up against the remnant of the Scottish Church? Had England permitted the Church of Scotland twenty years more of industrious travail, either after the union of the crowns or after the Restoration, instead of putting her at the ban of tyranny, those Episcopalians and Papists would, humanly speaking, have no longer had an existence in the land. These ye took by the hand, and these lived to vex you with two sore rebellions; but that church which ye evil entreated was ever loyal to her kings, and never withstood them but when they were spoiling the prerogative of Christ. Ye beheaded your king; and ye would have beheaded his son also, whom the Scottish Church sheltered, and sought to avenge his father. And when we obtained kings who were not sacrilegious, but knew to reverence the church, then what people so

loyal as the people of the kirk of Scotland, who were placed in the furnace of the two rebellions? I say it again; to that body of the people, the Presbyterians of the North, this island is more indebted for her ordinance of righteous royal power, than to Magna Charta, Clarendon Constitutions, or all the risings of the English people for liberty and for rights. For it is not the people that conquer a righteous government to themselves, but it is God that bestows it upon them: and to what doth God bestow it, save to the prayers of his people? and who are able to offer up prayers for righteous royal government, save those who understand wherein the same consisteth, and humbly pray and beseech the Lord to grant it; meanwhile bearing all things, and hoping, against hope, that in due time it will be yielded to their longing prayers? And if Britain had not possessed a Presbyterian plebeian church, as well as an Episcopalian prelatical church, she never would have had within her shores that witness for Christ's kingly office in his house which in the end drew down from Heaven that well-ordered constitution of Church and State, that tranquillity of the people at home, that glory of the nation abroad for valour and for equity, that strength of understanding and prolific invention of arts and sciences, which together have made us at once the palladium and the dread of the world.

This constitution of Church and State, which was set up, or rather told out in doctrine, at the Reformation; which for a long century was

wrestled for, and at the Revolution rightly established; consisteth essentially in this, That the king useth his power for the advancement of the church amongst his people, and therein giveth the amplest testimony of his allegiance and obedience unto Christ, who is Head over all unto his church; and then doth a king fulfil his vicegerency as he ought, when he is head over all the nobles, and magistrates, and people for the church; giving all encouragement to the preaching of the Gospel; giving all honour to the decisions of the church; causing her fasts to be observed and her solemnities; securing to her her emoluments, for the ends of the ministry, education, and the poor; seeing to it that his magistrates be without offence or scandal in the sight of the church; causing laws to be made according to the spirit of the Gospel; doing his utmost that idolatry and blasphemy, and the various forms of Antichrist, should cease within the land; requiring the Sabbath to be sanctified in all his borders; establishing his own court in comely state and purity of manners; and, in short, having an eye continually unto the glory of Christ, the Lord of all unto his church. This, I say, is the true estate of a Christian king: who yet, withal, may not in the smallest matter interfere with the order and government and discipline and doctrine of the church, save when the same hath grown into grievous scandal and obliquity; and even then he should proceed by the counsel of wise, learned, and holy divines, whom

God will not fail, in such an emergency, to bring unto his hand. And the church, in her place, ought to abide in apostolical simplicity and purity, just as if she had received no honour or emolument from the state ; guarding herself especially from covetousness, and courtliness, and ambition, and other forms of worldly aggrandizement. She ought never to look upon establishment as her right, but as the singular grace and favour of God. She ought never to look upon the power as otherwise than covered with a gracious clothing, which it may please God at any time to take away from it ; in which case her allegiance and her duty remain all the same. Moreover, she ought to feel, that, in virtue of being established over a realm, as of England or of Scotland, she hath a responsibility unto the king, added to her responsibility unto Christ ; just as a wife hath a responsibility unto her husband, added to her responsibility unto God. The responsibility of the church unto the king, is for the souls of his people, that they may be instructed in holy doctrine ; for the lives of his people, that they may be ordered according to holy discipline ; for the loyalty of his people, that they may be taught to honour the king, and those under him who are placed by him in authority. And not in respect of the people only, and their well-being, is the church beholden unto the king in virtue of her establishment ; but likewise in respect of all the servants and office-bearers of the state, to preach

and pray continually, that they may be rightly counselled and rightly entreated for before the Lord : Unto soldiers and sailors to discourse of valour and temperance, and trust in the God of battles ; who, when he poureth out the spirit of victory upon any people, doth make one to chase a thousand, and two to put ten thousand to flight : Unto magistrates and counsellors and jurors to discourse of equity, mingled with mercy ; of the protection of the widow and the fatherless ; of the righting of the poor and the needy ; of the punishment of wrong and oppression ; and that they should ever bear about with them the honour and the dignity of the representatives of the king : Unto rich men, and unto esquires, and unto nobles, who possess the land in their own right, yet not in their own possession, but for the king's honour and the kingdom's wealth, to discourse of honour and of duty, as to the heads of the people ; who should shew them what is noble and excellent in man, and go before them, in and out, in all that concerneth the common wealth of the state ; promoting peace and harmony within their bounds ; ministering out of their abundance unto the necessities of the poor and unto the relief of those whom Providence afflicteth, and contributing generously from the income which ariseth out of the land unto the wants and needs which are required to uphold the state and the church in becoming dignity ; and in times of danger to arm and march at the head of the

people; and so forth, throughout their high prerogative. These offices, I say, unto king, and prince, and peer, and judge, and magistrate, and people, doth the church owe, in virtue of her establishment over the kingdom. She oweth it unto Christ, in the person of his vicergerent represented; and she may not fail from this portion of her duty, without offending vitally against her King and Lord. Ah! how little we ministers of an established church be-think us of our high political calling! some, in their pride, levelling themselves with the king and his estates, and saying, 'Let us alone, meddle not with us:' others, again, in their puritanism, saying, 'Ah! religion hath nothing to do with politics.' Of whom I perceive, at this day, the former to be growing in the universities, especially the old Tory university, of this kingdom; and it is rank papistry: the latter, again, I perceive to be universal amongst the Evangelical, who have learned from the Dissenters. If I were the king, I would order a rod to the back of these symbolizers with the Papacy, to teach them better obedience; and I would pay off the latter, and let them go about their own occupation of preaching without any respect to the kingdom. This mixture of Popery and Puritanism—strange wedlock!—carried the abolition of the Test and Corporation Acts, and opened the magistracy of England to men of any principle, and any profession—to men of no principle and of no profession.

I am more grieved for the state of indifference which is growing between the kingdom and the church, than words can express; and most of all grieved that it should have fallen to the lot of one who is every way so unworthy and incompetent, to stand up for the ancient foundations of the church and the kingdom. They laugh me to scorn; they treat me as a man demented; and were it not that faith hath established and taught me not to make haste, methinks I would go demented, to see the Churches of England and of Scotland so lost to their ancient and true dignity. Oft, indeed, in the silence of the night, in my meditations upon my bed, I do consider with myself, whether it is I who have gone astray from the truth, or the multitude of my brethren: and fain, fain would I come to the conclusion that I am in the error, and that they are in the right; but my conscience, the word of God, and the continual testimony of the holy catholic church, will not permit me to think in these matters with the men of this day. I cannot say, with the Dissenters and the Liberals, the state ought to know no difference of faith, because I believe the king may not rule but under the authority and for the religion of Jesus Christ, the Lord of all. To say so, so far as respecteth the state, would be to say, 'Cease to expect the blessing of Divine Providence, cease to believe in a Providence at all: a Mohammedan kingdom is as good before the Lord as a Papist kingdom; and a

Papist kingdom as good as a Protestant, and an Infidel kingdom as good as any, if not the best of all.' And as it respects the church, such speeches do say, that the church hath no relation of subordination to the magistrate; which I hold to be flat Popery. But the truth of the matter is, that this speech is flat popery only in the mouths of some of our high-church scholars: amongst the great body of the unlearned Dissenters, it is flat plebeianism: for while they would separate the royal and aristocratical parts of the state from the obligations of the church, it is only to hand the honour and the trust over to the people, in whom they place the right of establishing what doctrine, what discipline, and appointing what government, pleaseth them best. And then, by establishing large affiliated associations of various sorts, it cometh to pass, that the people are organized into a most efficient controuling power over the church and over the ministry of the church; and versatile, volatile public opinion, cometh in the place of stedfast, ordained law; and the church becometh a servant of public opinion, instead of being the servant of Christ her head; and the kings and estates are left at ease from any charge of the church, like an Eastern monarch in the heart of his palace, until public opinion gathers such a strength that he and all his court must yield to it likewise. And what have we then, but public opinion become king and priest; the mob become Melchizedek; liberality, that is, dissoluteness, with dissolution of every ancient

bulwark of the church and of the kingdom? It is from the ignorance of all principles with respect to the union of church and state; to the silence of all preachers upon these most needful topics; to the withdrawing from public observation, and from public audience, of the doctrines established at the Reformation concerning these vital matters: to this most shameful dereliction of their duties and desertion of their posts, on the part of that established clergy of the Church of Scotland and the Church of England, it is owing, upon the one hand; and to the unwearied diffusion in every way, from the pulpit, from the periodical press, from the platform, of the contrary doctrines, under the affectation of liberality and the guise of charity, upon the other hand: to these two causes, I say, it is owing, in a main degree, that the dissolution of the bonds of political society hasten at such a pace. This is, indeed, a main cause of that breaking-up of human society—or I should rather say, of Christian community—which hath been exposed in the foregoing discourses: and next after this I place the entire ignorance, or disbelief, of the ordinances of the church. But this I separate to another discourse.

III. And now I come, in the third and last place, to improve this great subject to my own flock, and to each individual thereof: in the fulfilment of which office, methinks I cannot be guided so well as by observing how the Apostle

instructeth his son Timothy to conduct himself towards such of this spirit as had already appeared in the church. His exhortation immediately follows his description of the last times, and is in these words, "From such turn away;" but the words, being literally translated out of the original, are, "And such turn away:" to understand the exact import of which we must give heed to the structure of the context, which consisteth of two exhortations from the Apostle to Timothy: the former contained in the first verse, exhorting him to "know this" for certain, that in the last days of the dispensation now begun, perilous times should come; for this reason, that men—that is, men in general, men professing godliness—should have given up the fear and love of God, and departed from the Spirit and mind of Christ, yielding themselves up to selfish and worldly and diabolical passions, which he describeth. This general defection having exhorted Timothy to believe and bear in mind, as being in the last days about to be realized, without mentioning when these last days should occur—which I believe to have been known neither to the Apostle nor to the Evangelist, that they might be ever on the alert; for which reason I believe the exhortation to be given—he immediately proceeds to point the attention of Timothy to characters of this sort already present in the church, and exhorts him in the text to "turn away such:" not, as I conceive, to turn away from them, but, actively,

to turn them away. The structure of the context, therefore, is a general warning, and a particular instance of the thing warned against, with instructions how to treat it. The general warning is, that the church in the end was to become reprobate, to grow apostate, to lose faith and a good conscience, to relax all the bonds of discipline, and otherwise make shipwreck of the cause of Christ: which certain result and pre-determinate purpose of God being forewarned of, it became so much more the duty of the Evangelist Timothy to arm himself and defend the church against the snare of Satan, of which he had been warned. And the Apostle, to help his son, and to strengthen his hands in the diligence and watchfulness of a pastor, as he had helped him by his prediction unto the knowledge of a teacher, doth in our text admonish him to turn away these: "And these turn away," reject, or repel, or repudiate: not only have nothing to do with them, but act and feel and speak against them. Then, to make his example more definite, he describes the goings on of such; which are as follows:—First, they "creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come unto the knowledge of the truth." This soft and carpet ministry; this shunning of the controversy with men, and avoiding of all perilous encounters; this proselytism, insinuation, and seduction of

the weak and unstable, he setteth in contrast with his own "teaching, and manner of life, and purpose, and faith, and long-suffering, and charity, and patience, and persecution, and suffering" in various places, from which the Lord had delivered him; and unto which all who would live godly in Christ Jesus should be exposed. Whether there be any parallel between these in-door and carpet preachers of the Apostles' times, and certain in our own days, I leave you to judge. The second procedure of these forerunners and types of the men of the last times is, that "as Jannes and Jambres (the Egyptian magicians) withstood Moses, so these also resist the truth, being men corrupted in mind, and of no insight or experience in the faith;" whose folly he declares should be speedily exposed, as was that of the magicians, and so they should meet with a check. This I believe doth refer to the confusion which was brought upon all those Judaizing teachers by the destruction of the Jewish state and worship, which took place not many years after this was written, whereby all their idle tales and disputations were put an end to. For that they were chiefly of the circumcision who did then pervert the church with their vain traditions is manifest from these words of Titus, i. 10: "There are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision; whose mouths must be stopped; who subvert whole houses, teaching things which

they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." These men, clinging to their old traditions, would have kept the Jews in bondage, and brought the Gentiles into bondage of the Law of Moses; even as Jannes and Jambres would have kept them under the bondage of Pharaoh; setting themselves up against Paul, as those set themselves up against Moses. And as Jannes and Jambres received their check, and haply their destruction, in the overthrow of Egypt and its king by the hand of Moses; so these Jewish opponents of Christian liberty—concerning whom the Apostle saith in another place, that "they please not God, and are contrary to all men; forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always; for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost"—did receive the check and exposure which the Apostle threatened, by the overthrow and dissolution of the Jewish state, which would have held the Christian church in thralldom. But that their place would be supplied by others; that Satan would find other agents with whom to carry on the antichristian work; and that the purpose of God concerning the wickedness of men, and the perilousness of the last times, would certainly accomplish itself; is expressly declared in the 13th verse: "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived:" whereby is declared the gradual embittering and enlarging of that spirit of error and seduction, which should in the end bring

about the consummation of iniquity. Against this mighty spirit of error and seduction the Apostle stayeth and establisheth his son Timothy, by exhorting him to continue in the instruction and knowledge which he had learned at his mouth; and in the faith of the holy Scriptures, which he had known from his childhood. Then, taking unto himself Apostolical authority, and speaking unto his son, as it were with his dying voice, he doth bear testimony "before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who is to judge the living and the dead, according to his appearing and kingdom;" and commandeth Timothy to "preach the word; to press on in season and out of season; to reprove, to rebuke, to exhort, in all long-suffering and teaching;" and then, turning his eye upon the future, he giveth him this reason for such constancy and faithfulness: 'Do it now,' saith he, 'while the season lasteth; for the time shall be when wholesome doctrine they will not endure, but, according to their proper and private lusts, shall multiply teachers in heaps, by reason of their itching ears: and from the truth, verily, they shall turn away their ear, and be turned upon fables. Watch, then, thou in all things; endure evil; do the work of an evangelist; fulfil thou the ministry.'" Such, we may say, is the Apostle's last charge; his last and dying words unto Timothy, in the prospect of that evil and perverted age of the church unto which he looked forward: for, immediately after uttering these

words, he predicts and rejoices over his immediate departure: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure draweth nigh. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not me only, but to all them also that love his appearing."

The whole of this context I have now resumed, with the view of endeavouring, after so large a discourse as I have made upon these characteristics, to conclude with some practical instructions, delivered in the same spirit in which Paul addresseth Timothy. Keeping my eye upon the context, therefore, I consider the exhortation "to turn away, or remove, or reject" men of the evil spirit described above, to be an exhortation or instruction with respect to the discipline of the church; teaching all of us, and especially the rulers of the church, to be ever upon our guard against this spirit of insubordination unto authority, and gainsaying of the truth, which in the latter days is so mightily to prevail; and requiring of us the utmost diligence in withstanding Satan's endeavour to bring the church at length into this apostasy. Our part it is, therefore, not only to exhort the brethren against these forms of the infidel and unprincipled spirit, but likewise to prevent and hinder such from entering into or abiding in the church, lest they may prove a

root of bitterness whereby many may be defiled. St. Paul points out to Timothy men who seem to have taken upon them without authority the office of teachers; and went about from house to house, insinuating themselves into the confidence of the weaker sex; and withstanding, by their seductive arts, the open, manly, bold, and full preaching of the Gospel which the Apostles ministered. How many there be of this sort in these times, who withstand, by private and underhand methods, the valiant and powerful preaching of Christ's truth, I need not mention to you, who know it so well. These the Apostle would have us to reprove and to avoid; and, if they should seek by their insinuations to gain access unto us, to turn them away: not to be satisfied with their fair pretensions, with their frequent use of godly forms of speech, but to try the spirit they are of by some of those tests contained in this text; and, if they prove to be under this evil spirit, then to give them no countenance, but withstand them. Opposite to such wholesome and wise discrimination, is that false spirit of charity, or indifference, which men in outward appearance and public places observe; while in private they atone for it to their own diseased conscience by the most narrow and bitter sectarianism: insomuch, that I know not whether to blame more the indiscriminate-ness of their public intercourse and profession, or the uncharitableness of their private and

party feelings. To preserve us from this most wicked hypocrisy, the Apostle gives us the canon in the text: in the observance of which much wisdom and discretion are required, otherwise we should be led into all manner of errors: for it hath pleased the Lord to cast our lot in a time when the church is almost filled with men of such a spirit as the Apostle referreth to; who, being corrupted in their understanding, and not capable of thinking soundly, but inexperienced and little seen in matters of faith, do go about to pervert the way of truth, and to withstand the Gospel in its liberty and its power. How, then, are we to behave ourselves, surrounded as we are on all sides with such prattlers against, and cunning opposers of, the truth?

Are we wholly to cut off intercourse with such? Then, as the Apostle saith elsewhere, we must go out of the world, cease from our traffic and occupation, and break up the domestic relationships of life; whose ordinances we must stedfastly observe, at all risks, and against all oppositions: and this, I think, so far as it goes, is a proper solution of the difficulty. Let us fulfil the ordinances of life honestly, truly, and affectionately unto men, of whatever spirit they be; and in so doing we shall bear a continual testimony to the truth of God's Holy Spirit. This rule cannot be avoided, so far as it goes. It will guide servants, masters, husbands, wives, parents, children, benefactors and benefited,

buyers, sellers, and the like, how to carry themselves in these relationships, never making void the ordinance of God. This is a due respect unto God's providence, and a proper resignation unto his will. But, besides doing that which is required of us by respect unto the ordinances of life, we owe unto every one a debt of grace and love, such as God hath bestowed upon us : and grace expresseth itself in no way so well as in admonishing a brother of his error, with all gentleness and long suffering, " if God, peradventure, will give him repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." This diligence of admonition and entreaty should be fully essayed, before we think of any other measure. And though the preaching of the word, being an ordinance of special blessing and power, may not be taken as a measure of ordinary private admonition, yet ought this to be an encouragement to every man to testify and witness against this spirit, that it hath been made manifest in the midst of this church, and in the experience of almost all who belong to us, how willing God is to second and succeed with his blessing every testimony made against the evil spirit of these days, under which I suppose the greater part of ourselves did heretofore live. This, then, is the second measure which we should take—namely, to admonish, and instruct, and remonstrate with, those who are fallen away from the Spirit of Christ into this spirit of false liberality. We should be faithful unto our God and

loving to our neighbour, and we should withstand the insinuation of that false spirit wherever we discern it. Now, the effect of such uncompromising yet gracious dealing will be, to separate from us, as it were of their own accord, those who are given up of God unto the evil possession, while it joineth unto us those whom it pleaseth God to recover out of the snare of the devil. If, however, it should so happen, for the trial of our constancy, that the Lord should permit us to be molested with the perversity and pertinacity of such as the Apostle describeth—if, for example, we should be convinced by the Spirit in the midst of a professing church or congregation consisting wholly, or almost wholly, of such—then it is our part, however painful, to carry into effect the admonition of the Apostle, and to “turn away such;” to do this also in love, if haply it may be instrumental in convincing and converting them. And this course which I recommend, is, I think, the right devoting unto God of that mastery which every man hath of his own affairs, and that liberty which he hath in the formation of his own society and friendships. Even philosophy teacheth us that society and friendship ought to be formed upon other principles than interest or conveniency; that we ought to be guided therein by disinterested affection and honourable feelings; choosing men for their worth, for their reputation with good men, for their faithfulness to their trusts,

and, in one word, for their good and excellent spirit. Now, if philosophy holdeth such high language, surely religion should not hold a lower; and if Christians are to choose their friends and familiars by the like or still higher qualities, then, unto what standard are they to refer, but the standard of holy Scripture? and what manner of spirit are they to prefer, but the Spirit of Christ? thus yielding unto God the honour and the glory, and adopting the resolution of the Psalmist: "A froward heart shall depart from me; I will not know a wicked person. Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath a high look, and a proud heart, will not I suffer. Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight."

So much with respect to the conduct of private individuals. And now, with respect to the rulers of the church—unto whom more especially I think the precept is addressed—it is a distinct and explicit instruction not to suffer men of this evil spirit to abide in the midst of the brethren. Exhortations to the same effect are to be found in other parts of holy Scripture:—Rom. xvi. 17: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid (fall away, and decline from) them: for

they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly ; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." And again : 2 Thess. iii. 6 : " Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves (set yourselves away) from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." And again ; 2 John, 9, 10 : " He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." These may suffice, from the many Apostolical precepts to the same effect, to teach us in what estimation the Apostles held the unity of faith and spirit in the church, and what zeal they felt against those who had suffered themselves to be perverted by false doctrine or an evil spirit. And where this part of the discipline of the church, all-painful though it be, is not carried into effect, there is no end to the evils which ensue. Let no one think that such occasions will not arise : God himself doth send them. Is it not written, 1 Cor. xi. 19, " There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be manifest among you ;" and again, Matt. xviii. 7, " It must needs be that offences come ?" And the continual occasion of such

heresies and offences is given by our Lord, in the parable of the Tares and the Wheat; where the tares are the children of the wicked one, planted in the same field with the wheat, which is the children of the kingdom, and then growing beside the wheat until the harvest. The church in its visible form, as it lies under the observation and is committed to the government of men, is not, as some schismatics and sectaries allege, intended by God to be a pure and unmixed communion, but is ordained to be made up of elect and reprobate; amongst whom the many are only called, and the few are chosen. It is only, as yet, like the earth unpurged of its impurities, and bearing thorns and briers, as well as vines and figs. Now, as the husbandman expecteth weeds to shew themselves, and the moment they can be discovered doth root them up, before they propagate their evil kind; and as the vine-dresser doth expect fruitless branches, and so soon as they prove themselves such doth prune them away: even so are the rulers of the church, unto whom Christ hath committed the keeping and the dressing of it, to expect that these fruitless branches in the vine of Christ, these noxious weeds in the field of the children of the kingdom, will in time manifest themselves—I say not all, but in sufficient abundance to prove the existence of tares in the wheat, and to expose the schismatic, sectarian notion, that the

baptized and the communicants were meant by God to be of elect persons only: in sufficient abundance, also, to demonstrate the necessity of discipline, and to try the diligence and the faithfulness of those who hold the power of the keys. And when such offences and heresies in the bosom of the church do shew themselves, it is our commanded and responsible office to take diligent order that they should be removed—if possible, by the word of brotherly admonition; and if not, be repudiated by the power of the keys, which God hath given to his church. The church is the great symbol of the election: although it be not the very election, yet containing it. The church is the great symbol of the kingdom: although not the very kingdom, yet containing the children of the kingdom. And, therefore, to outward appearance the church should represent that of which it is the symbol; and we, the rulers of the church, are called upon to see, that in the variety of gifts it contain one spirit, and in the variety of administrations acknowledge one Lord. In the exercise of which function, much wisdom and much discretion are needed; lest a spirit of inquisition on the one hand, or on the other a spirit of latitudinarianism, introduce itself. There are various degrees of attainment in knowledge, and in faith, and in holiness. Now, the strong are to help the weak, the wise to instruct the ignorant, and all to bear each

other's burdens. And such a spirit of brotherly kindness and charity hath ever been found the best defence of the unity of the faith and the communion of the saints; the best preservative against divisions, sects, and heresies. And when Satan would introduce the antichristian spirit, it is generally either by the violation or under the counterfeit of charity. At present, it is under the counterfeit of charity; under cover of most enlarged charity, benevolence, and liberality; that he is bringing up his last great attack upon the bulwarks of the church. Now the Spirit of God in the members of Christ is wiser than the wiles of the serpent: and the rulers of the church, who are appointed by a holy ordinance unto that government, may rest well assured that they shall be at all times enabled to know the form which the spirit of Antichrist is putting on, and to preserve with all watchfulness and faithfulness a church, be it many or be it few, against his wiles. But to this it is necessary they should ever remember that there *is* a spirit of Antichrist, seeking or forcing its way into the catholic church; nay, more, not only seeking its way, but having its lodgment therein, and seeking to pervert the whole community.

Let us not flatter ourselves therefore, beloved brethren, that we are to be exempted more than others from the trials of this evil spirit: it will appear in the midst of us. No; let us be pre-

pared for its appearances, by such a communion and fellowship of love amongst ourselves, such a strong and healthy life of love, such a firmly knit and well-jointed body of Christ; enlightened withal with so much of that Spirit of truth which teacheth all things, and anointed with such an unction of health as shall cast out the poisonous matter when it appeareth, and, like the body when delivered from unwholesome humours, appear more beautiful, feel more healthy, and act more lively than before. There is an action in the human body, by which, when any part becometh dead, and, by losing the conservative power of life, hasteneth to putrescence, and begetteth in itself acrid poisons, which would communicate to the healthy parts around—in such a state the body hath a faculty whereby it separates the dead part, which drops away of its own accord; or, if it be deeply seated in the inward parts, then it is surrounded with an enclosure, or chest, of such a kind as to prevent it from doing any mischief to the parts around. This is the process by which a communion of saints will separate from them such as are of an evil spirit, who will of their own accord go forth from the midst of men with whom they have so little sympathy. This seems to have been the case in the primitive church; as we learn from the First Epistle of John, who writeth thus concerning those who had been seduced by the

spirit of Antichrist : “ Little children, it is the last time : and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists ; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us : for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us ; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.” This, however, may not always be the favoured lot of the church. God may permit men of an evil spirit to trouble her peace, and even to obtain a certain authority over her members : as was the case with the Corinthian church, where one who had grievously offended was in no mean repute amongst the brethren, using his arts to prejudice them against the true, faithful, and holy ministers of the Lord Jesus. And what doth the Apostle Paul in such a case require ? Hear, from his own words, 1 Cor. v. 3 : “ For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed ; In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump ? Purge out therefore the old

leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened." This is the last resort of the church: to separate from herself, by an act of power, that which will not separate of its own accord, neither enter into the unity of the body and Spirit of Christ.

Now ye have heard at great length the description of this the spirit of the last times. It cannot any longer be hidden from you, either in yourselves or in others. If you feel it in yourselves, seek deliverance from it by all the means which God hath provided; and especially by avoiding those who are sold under it, and cleaving unto those who are redeemed from it. And, being delivered in your own spirit, seek help of God to deliver others. Wherever its gainsaying of the truth, wherever its insubordination unto powers and authorities, wherever its indifference to the great distinctions between Christ and Antichrist, appeareth, there diligently contend against it, as the Antichrist of the Protestant church and the evil spirit of the last days. Thus shall ye become in this city as a place of refuge, a hiding-place, unto every distressed spirit, which desireth the communion of the saints and the nourishment of the body of Christ.

In addition to these general instructions, I wish to add some particular directions, which, under God, may be profitable in guiding you how to carry yourselves in the midst of that

general apostasy from the faith, and cleaving unto expediency and intellect and liberality, which prevaieth.

Now, my first counsel is, to furnish yourselves from the word of God with pithy and pertinent passages, which you may present unto them in behalf of those doctrines which they gainsay. Their pride is intellect; your trust is God's word: and if they will reason, give them God's word to reason about. This was the way in which our Lord encountered both the temptations of Satan and the obstinate perversity of the Pharisees; and I have found it in my own experience the only effectual way of putting to silence the gainsayers: so that often, when I have been cast amongst my brethren in the ministry and they would provoke me with questions, I have answered, Choose your own book of Scripture, and your own portion of that book, and let us together bring our own understandings and our opinions to the word of God.

Secondly; Prepare yourselves to hear the scoffings of the human intellect against the faith. To scoff, is the language of pride; and pride is the ruling attribute of the unsanctified intellect of man. Prepare yourselves, therefore, to bear reproach for the faith of Christ's person, Christ's advent, and of Christ's kingdom; and when Satan in them scoffeth, remember, that he speaketh of his own, for he hath been a

to find men not so? If the liberal or radical spirit did not prevail above measure, and beyond all proportion of former times in the church, we should have no proof that these were the latter times. If they did not delight to gainsay the truth; if they did not backbite the preachers of the truth; and, instead of meeting them openly, steal their way into houses and endeavour to subvert them privately; if they did not withstand our endeavour to lead the people out of Egypt into the promised land, as Jannes and Jambres did withstand Moses; if they were not of an unsound and insufficient and corrupted understanding, rude, unskilful, and unapproved in matters of faith; if they were not of itching ears, heaping to themselves whole herds of teachers; if they were not ever learning and never coming unto the knowledge of the truth; and, finally, if they could endure sound doctrine; then we would not have before us the sure signs and marks of that apostasy of the last days, which the Apostle hath described both by general characteristics, and by particular personal habits. Wherefore, I pray you, dear brethren, not to be amazed, but, contrariwise, confirmed, when you see how the whole world almost is turned unto this evil spirit. I remember an expression of one of the Fathers, I think St. Hilary, who said, "We were amazed to find the whole world turned unto Arianism."

So may we, upon whom the testimony in these last days has fallen, say, 'We are amazed to find the whole world turned unto liberalism.' I pray you, my beloved brethren, while you lament along with me over this crisis to which the church is come, that you would not stand the less stedfast because you stand very much alone, but rather be the more faithful and true, waiting daily at your posts for the coming of the Lord.

And now I could say much more, but the time draweth to a close. One thing, however, I must say, that, when the worst comes to the worst, we must be willing to forsake all for Christ: not only to be cut off, but to cut off; not only to be hated, but to hate: according as it is written, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." The word is in the active mood, *hate*; signifying that a Christian must be able to hate: and hate what? the nearest and the dearest of all affections, yea, the love of life itself. And again it is written, "He that loveth father and mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." Therefore be prepared for every extremity of hatred; be prepared to meet

the blast of the terrible ones like a storm against the wall. If in these discourses, which I now close, I have rendered the church of Christ any service, or brought any evil unto the kingdom of Satan, then be assured he will not be idle, but, when he hath permission of God, will fall upon me to the uttermost. And if ye, by hearing of these truths and believing them, and abiding faithful by me in the midst of all mockings, scoffings, and derisions, have done likewise, then upon you also shall the storm fall heavily. But be not amazed when ye suffer for Christ's sake: on the other hand, rejoyce, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you. Count it not a strange thing when ye are called upon to suffer. Count it joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience; but let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully: for what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if when ye do well and suffer for it ye take it patiently, this is acceptable to God: for even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps.

As I have sought to be faithful in warning

the church in general, and you, my people, in particular, against this stumbling-block, which the Lord hath permitted Satan to lay before us, I pray you be ye warned, and warn others: for indeed the times are very perilous. Every thing seen will be shaken more and more; all outward evidences and apparent helps of faith will be removed more and more; that the faith of God's people may not rest upon that which is seen, but upon that which is unseen; not upon that which is present, but upon that which is hoped for. Therefore, again and again I entreat you, be not taught of me, but be taught of the Holy Spirit. I have fulfilled my office as a watchman: give heed now unto yourselves. I am clear from the blood of all men, according to the word of the Lord, Ezek. iii. 17—21: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." Again, when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity,

and I lay a stumbling-block before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the righteous man that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul."

FINIS.



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